

Every-day Life in South Africa



E. E. K. LOWYDES



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THE OLD MISSION FARM.

EVERY-DAY LIFE IN SOUTH AFRICA.

BY

E. E. K. LOWNDES.

WITH FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS.

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PREFACE.

“SEND me another letter soon,” wrote a friend to me. “Your last was so interesting ; it tells so many things one cannot find in books.”

This first suggested to me the idea of writing about those little things which travellers generally either do not notice or do not think it worth while to describe ; and yet, if we want to make a new place our home, it is just those that we would like to know about, for the little every-day items have much more influence on our comfort and happiness than have the great things of the world.

Names of persons, where mentioned, are of course fictitious, but everything else is truthfully stated. Where information has been received from others, it has always been from those on whose veracity dependence could be placed.

E. E. K. LOWNDES.

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EVERY-DAY LIFE IN SOUTH AFRICA.

CHAPTER I.

OUTWARD BOUND.

Why I Went—The Third Class—Arrangement—Company—
Pleasures of Travelling—Our Stewards—Knife-Cleaning—
Stars—Table Bay—Disappointments—Lodgings.

FOR two years I had looked longingly towards South Africa. My health had not been just what could desire ; my work of teaching had to be given up for a time and more active employment substituted. But it is not easy in middle life to leave work that one loves and take kindly to new. I missed the merry, loving children around me, and thought that in the country, under brighter skies, with a clearer atmosphere, I could again engage in my favourite occupation.

It wants pluck to go off to a strange place alone when you do not feel well, especially when all your friends and relatives are against your going, and it took two years to develop that quality sufficiently

to get me started. Now I only wish I had gone when I first thought of it.

Having decided to go, the next question was, How? I did not quite fancy going third class, but second was double the money, and friends who had made the voyage assured me that the accommodation was everything that could be desired, and that I was likely to meet with quite as respectable company in the third class as in the second. So I determined to try it, and found no cause to regret my choice.

A cold, gloomy afternoon in March found me on board the large and beautiful steamer that was to take me to Cape Town.

The third class occupies the stern, or back part, of the boat, and in some respects this is the pleasantest part of the ship. Being away from the engines and cooks' galleys, it is one of the coolest parts. The vibration from the screw is felt a little more plainly there, but you soon get used to that. We had a large, airy saloon, and our cabins, which contained eight berths each, were arranged around it. As we were not very full, there were only three young women sharing my cabin, so we each had a spare bed, which we utilised as a catch-all, and found very convenient. A pleasant promenade deck was over our saloon, and there was another on the lower deck, occupying the space between our quarters and the second-class saloon.

I must confess that I felt rather doubtful at first as to the sort of company I had got into, there were so many quite rough-looking men going out; but I learned that appearances are often deceitful. No men could have been quieter or behaved better. I

have crossed the Atlantic several times first class, and there was nothing but betting, gambling, and drinking among the men. But I never saw a game played for money, nor any one, in our part, the worse for liquor during the whole voyage. After we had all got over our sea-sickness, I used to notice many of the rougher-looking men quietly reading their prayer-books or Bibles on deck before breakfast, and Sunday was kept very quietly. People may sneer at the good Old Book, but travel about the world a bit, and you will soon find whether those who respect it or those who despise it are the best sort of people among whom to be thrown.

It is astonishing how few people enjoy the real pleasures of travel. Give them a penny weekly or a novel and they might just as well be in their sitting-rooms at home. One of my room-mates spent all the day in reading, and got through twelve large novels during the voyage. I asked her how much of them she remembered. "Oh," she said, "I did not read them to remember!" She thought me quite an ignorant personage because I had read nothing, but I consider the advantage decidedly on my side. I had acquired a fair amount of knowledge both of human nature and ship life without either tiring my eyes or trying to ruin my memory.

Our food was excellent, well cooked, and nicely served, but with much less formality than in the other saloons. Forward, the stewards behave with all the decorum befitting an English man-servant, part of whose education seems to consist in schooling his face to be entirely without expression when on duty. Our young stewards had not yet

commenced that branch of their education. We were not the "upper ten," so there was no need to treat us as such. They were most kind and attentive, and in no way rude; but they were full of life and mischief, and we chatted and joked with them in a way that would not be tolerated in the other parts of the ship. One afternoon, going down into our saloon, I was greatly amused to find an energetic housewife industriously cleaning the knives, while the merry young steward, who should have been doing it, sat beside her, playing the concertina, both evidently enjoying the change.

The evenings were pleasant, the sky generally clear, and it was very interesting to watch familiar stars sink out of sight, and others, quite strangers, appear. The southern heavens seem to me, if possible, more beautiful than the northern. The Milky Way is very extensive, and so bright. The Southern Cross is much prettier than I expected from what I had read about it; though the stars are not very large they show well, having only two brighter ones anywhere near. Just over the Cross is a peculiar pear-shaped patch of darkness, in which not a star is visible. It is called "The Coal Sack."

The intermediate steamers do not usually arrive at Cape Town until Sunday morning, but our voyage had been such a particularly pleasant one that we got in dock at four o'clock on Saturday afternoon. All day we had glimpses of the shore, and about half-past one Table Mountain, which is just behind Cape Town, became visible. As we entered the bay the scene was lovely: Sea

Point, a beautiful suburb of Cape Town edged it on our right ; opposite towered the grand mountain ; on our left was Robin Island, with a flat stretch of country beyond it and rugged mountains in the distance.

We were all in high spirits at arriving a day before time. One seems to have an affection for the ship one travels in, and likes her to do better than others ; this time, however, our joy was short-lived. Those who were expecting friends to meet them strained their eyes in vain to find the familiar faces. Only about a dozen people stood idly on the dock to watch us in, and general disappointment and perplexity took the place of our previous joy. The cause of our scant welcome was soon ascertained. No one expected us until the next morning. Ships cannot be signalled here until an hour before landing, so only those residing in Cape Town could possibly know of our coming in time to meet us.

My expected escort, like the rest, was missing ; but as he was a stranger, my disappointment was not particularly keen. Knowing the address of my lodgings, I took a cab and was soon set down there. It was a large old Dutch two-storey house, with lofty rooms, in all of which the beams showed, and the ceilings were of dark wood. The locality was not a fashionable one, but it was a convenient situation and a very comfortable lodging-place.

Tea was soon over ; and, too impatient to wait till the next morning, I started out for my first peep at Cape Town.

CHAPTER II.

CAPE TOWN.

General Appearance — Balconies — Street Scenes — Coloured Dress—Drainage—Paving—Sidewalks—Table Mountain—Ascent—View—Botanical Gardens—Government Avenue—Library—Museum—Suburbs—Mail.

I WAS astonished to find Cape Town what it is. I had not expected such magnificence. The buildings and shops of its principal streets are quite equal to those of the best English towns. But what struck me most, on becoming better acquainted with it, was the wonderful variety of building, which constitutes one of the chief charms of the place. In English towns, whole streets of dwellings consist of bare brick walls in which doors and windows are placed at regular intervals. There is none of that dreary monotony here. In the principal streets are fine high buildings of greater or less architectural pretensions, many of them having a balcony on the level of the second storey which extends to the edge of the sidewalk, forming a shelter from the sun and obviating the use of awnings to the shop windows. These balconies are used as outdoor sitting-rooms. Hotels and boarding-houses have a second balcony, a storey higher, which serves as a roof to the first; this latter, ornamented with

plants, parrots, and canaries, forms a comfortable afternoon tea-room. As we leave the principal streets the buildings have only two storeys ; on the outskirts of the town, and in the suburbs, only one. Nearly all are ornamented with some kind of verandah ; though perfectly plain, white, flat-roofed houses are not uncommon, and look very pretty interspersed among the more ornate ones. These, I think, belong to the old Dutch times. They give the town a beautifully Oriental appearance, being so like many that one sees in pictures of Palestine.

Cape Town is really indescribable. It seems to me just England, America, and Orientalism, the past and the present, delightfully jumbled up together.

Passing along its wide and busy streets, you see the electric tram and the bicycle of modern civilisation, and the country waggon drawn by oxen, whose uncomfortable-looking yokes seem to date back to primitive ages. The beautiful fat mules—handsome animals, on which an Absalom might have deigned to ride—remind one of Oriental lands ; the wiry, nervous horses, always in a hurry—or if not, reminded that they ought to be by the crack of the long-lashed whip—are thoroughly American. Horses here are for use, not show. They are not particularly handsome animals ; but, oh, the beauty of their long, flowing tails ! When will the English outgrow the barbarous taste that can admire a docked horse !

If the animals suggest diversity of climes, even more so do the people. One sees mixed together Europeans, Malays, and Jews, beside natives and cross-breeds of all shades of colour, from the darkest

brown to nearly white. As a rule, the coloured people have excellent taste in the matter of dress ; even the elderly fat women know how to dress becomingly. They have their dress-skirts made very wide, gathered full around the waist, just sweeping the ground behind. With these dresses of light-coloured, clean print, a gay little shawl over the shoulders, and on the head a white or bright-coloured kerchief, which is tastefully arranged to form a sort of sunbonnet, they look clean, gay, and pretty. It seems such a pity that the flowing robes of the East have not been adopted by the masculine portion of the coloured race ; their dark skins look so well in all the colours of the rainbow, which they never mingle inharmoniously ; but the dreary black and white of English masculine attire looks gloomily monotonous when joined to dusky features. You sometimes see the Malays in their rich, flowing robes and gay turbans, and very handsome they look. They will be going to or from their mosque, into which no Christian may enter, and from whose minaret I have heard the call to prayers on the evening of their Sabbath.

No one need think that he is coming out of the world when he comes to Cape Town. He will miss nothing to which he is accustomed at home, and will find many charming things that are new to him. The shop windows are as well set out as those of London, and seem to contain everything that man could desire ; but should you wish for something which the shopkeeper has not, he will obligingly offer to send to England and get it for you if you can wait the six weeks necessary for its arrival !

In two points only is Cape Town behind English cities. First, the drainage has been abominable. The town is now being sewered throughout ; I am told the work has been going on for four years, and it will probably be as much longer before it is finished. It is to be hoped that the result will be satisfactory. The present effect is to make the air anything but savoury, especially in the evenings. But I must say I never saw anywhere a cleaner-looking city than Cape Town. Secondly, the pavement is just what we see on a country turnpike road in England—small stones and tar rolled smooth. It is all right for use, but does not look good enough to match the really handsome buildings, and in wet weather it is frightfully muddy. But the sidewalks are the curiosity. In the main streets are few eccentricities, but go along a side street, and, if you are going downhill, you suddenly arrive at the edge of a step a yard or more deep ; you look about, descent is impossible ; you retrace your steps and keep to the middle of the street, and from there inspect the sidewalks as you go along. You soon find that the deep step occurs very frequently if the gradient is steep. Sidewalks seem to have been considered as private property, not at all for the convenience of passers-by. Each house has made its own piece level, paying no regard to its neighbours.

Cape Town does not show itself as you approach it on the steamer, a slight rise of ground hiding most of the town from view, and your first visit to its principal streets gives you the impression that it is a small place ; later you find your mistake.

In shape it may be compared roughly to a butterfly with outstretched wings, the main streets occupying the place of the body; these stretch from Table Bay straight back towards Table Mountain till stopped by the Botanical Gardens. You can easily see both ends from any part of them, but walk out in the direction of the butterfly's wings and you will soon be glad to avail yourself of the electric tram.

Imagine the butterfly to have alighted on the seat of an old armchair, and it will give you a fairly good idea of the position of the hills about Cape Town. At the edge of the seat is Table Bay, the chair-back represents Table Mountain, while the two arms represent the spurs which stretch from it at either side, reaching about half-way to the water. That on your right as you face the mountain is the Lion's Head, and the Lion's Rump, usually called Signal Hill, because it is the point from which incoming steamers are sighted; that on the left, which is higher, rougher, and closer to the mountain, is the Devil's Peak.

The great perpendicular face of Table Mountain, 3,582 feet high and two miles long, seems to overhang the town, though really it is several miles off; but distances are very deceptive in this clear atmosphere. I have always imagined that the mountain faced the south, but the bay forms a little angle in the coast and the mountain is at the south of the bay, facing the north, and so its face is all day exposed to the sunshine, which, striking it in ever-varying angles, is continually bringing out new combinations of light and shadow on its surface. It never looks twice alike, and it is always beautiful.



From photo supplied by]

VIEW OF CAPE TOWN, SHOWING TABLE MOUNTAIN IN THE REAR.

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whether in its stern, bare grandeur, or covered with the billowy, white clouds that form its gigantic table-cloth. Everybody learns to love the mountain. On its sides grow most beautiful heaths of all sizes and shades, from tiny white bells like a pin's head to the vivid crimson of the Pride of the Mountain, whose flowers are about four times the size of the Scotch heather.

One day that I shall never forget was spent with a pleasant young English girl on the mountain's side. Going as far out of Cape Town as we could by tram, we had over a mile to ascend along the side of the Lion's Head—a lovely road with overhanging trees and a fine view of the mountain at our left. Having reached a point where the main road turns away from the mountain to go around the Lion's Head, we turned to our left and began by a rougher road to slowly ascend the side of the mountain itself. The upper half is perpendicular rock, one narrow cleft being the only place where it is possible to climb to the top from this side ; the lower half is a steep, rocky decline, at the foot of which are trees, high bushes, and heather. The road we followed led us along the side of the mountain a short distance below its perpendicular face. After walking about half a mile and enjoying our dinner under the shade of a tiny tree, we left the road and climbed straight up over innumerable rough stones till we could touch the side of the great wall of rock that towered above us. Such a climb it was ! It looked but a few steps, but we scrambled on and on, and it seemed to get no nearer, only the road we had left got farther and

farther away ; but at last we reached it, and sat down to enjoy one of the most lovely views in the world. Lying at our feet, spread out like a map so that we could trace its wide, straight streets and recognise many of its principal buildings, lay Cape Town ; beyond it the blue waters of the bay, bordered beyond the town by an edging of white sand. At our right the Devil's Peak towered, and beyond it we could see the suburbs of Cape Town stretching out, and a flat tract of country of wonderfully blended shades of brown and green, while far in the distance were the mountains of the mainland. On our left was the Lion's Head, clothed on this side to the top with trees, and beyond it Signal Hill, bare and treeless, looking so little that over it we could see the great ocean in the distance. For beautiful combinations of colour and variety of detail it is a view that has few equals throughout the world. We did not try to go on the top ; it is not safe to go without a guide, on account of the sudden forming of the cloud-cap, which comes without warning ; but we were quite satisfied with the view when but half-way up. We found numerous pretty wild-flowers that were new to us. It looked so strange to see geraniums growing wild among the rocks. The only living thing I saw was a gorgeous grasshopper, about three inches long and bright scarlet. I have since seen one similar in size, of dark bright green with a sort of crest on the head ; both were very beautiful.

The Botanical Gardens is a lovely spot, though I did not see it at its best. Winter is the season of flowers at the Cape, there being no frost, and the heavy rains interspersed with bright, sunny days just

suit vegetable life ; but even when only just reviving after the summer's drought it was very beautiful. Many varieties of palm tree and beautiful Scotch firs stood side by side. There are strange forms of cactus as high as small trees, clumps of bamboo, oaks, and eucalyptus trees, beside a great variety of shrubs and plants, some familiar, some unknown to me. It looked so strange to see camelias blossoming outside !

Close to the gardens is the Government building, a handsome structure of red brick with light stone trimmings. Leading from it along one side of the gardens is a handsome avenue, three-quarters of a mile long, lined with oak trees which were planted two hundred years ago. At the bottom of the gardens is the large free library where, beside a grand collection of books, is a free reading-room, containing all the best English and American periodicals. At the far end of the gardens is a spacious museum where days could be profitably spent. The collection of butterflies there is the most beautiful I have ever seen.

The suburbs of Cape Town extend around the base of the mountains in both directions. Beyond Signal Hill, Sea Point stretches down to the ocean. The shore here is a pretty mixture of strange, rough rocks and sand, with a background of rugged mountain sides. Around the Devil's Peak the suburbs follow the side of Table Mountain for a distance of about eight miles, and are reached by train or electric tram. This side of the mountain, being sheltered from the terrific winds that do so much harm to vegetation in Cape Town, is particularly beautiful. The houses, one-storeyed, have

verandahs and pretty little gardens in front. More pretentious mansions stand in extensive and well-laid-out grounds. Here are large pine woods. The streets are lined with pine trees, sometimes with eucalyptus trees, or "gum trees," as they are oftener called here. They are not unlike a very coarse-leaved willow, but not so spreading, some varieties growing more like a poplar in shape. The creamy white flower is pretty and curious ; its shape is like the cup of an acorn, and hundreds of stamens are arranged around its edge like a fringe of delicate silk. In some of the gardens was a large shrub bearing the same flower in rich crimson, and growing together in clusters, so that from a distance they looked like rhododendrons. Hedges of giant prickly-pear were plentiful, their pale yellow blossoms like a single rose in shape. Oleander hedges were one mass of pink flowers. Quince and pomegranate hedges were loaded with fruit. Great bunches of pampas grass waved their feathery plumes in the wind in many a garden. Calla lilies grow wild by every roadside, and will bear hundreds of flowers as the rain comes more plentifully. Tremendous aloes with thick leaves some eight feet long, and flower stalks as high as a telegraph pole, are also wild. How strangely beautiful everything looks ! And the bright sunshine and genial air enable one to enjoy it to the uttermost. Everything appears to do well here but grass ; bushes and pretty-leaved wild plants abound, but you see no grass, except where it is watered daily and carefully cared for ; even then, though green and flourishing, it is very coarse, not at all like the velvet lawns of England.

For those who can afford it (both house rent and living are very dear in this part of the world), I can imagine few more attractive places of residence than the more distant of these suburbs, over which the beautiful mountain keeps its sheltering guard. They lie so far around it that the side which faces Cape Town is invisible ; but though the level top and table-like appearance have gone, it is still rugged, grand, and majestic.

The great event of the week at Cape Town is the arrival of the English mail. Every one seems to expect something by it, and on Tuesday morning folks begin to cast glances towards the dock for a glimpse of the steamer's smoke-pipe. If it is there, each goes off to work full of expectations—often vain, alas!—of the letters that will be awaiting them at dinner-time. What a busy trade the newsagent at the railway station does when the English papers and magazines are just in ! Another important event is getting your English letters into the box before two o'clock on Wednesday afternoon, that they may be off by the steamer at four.

In spite of novel sights and variety of peoples there is something indescribably English in the atmosphere of Cape Town ; you seem to feel as if you were not far away, but in some unexplored corner of old England still. It is when you look at the date of your last letter that you are undeceived, and realise how far off you really are.

Do not imagine that the six weeks I spent at Cape Town were all devoted to sightseeing. No, indeed. My business was to find a place as governess on a farm in the country, and this I found could not be

done very expeditiously. The first thing was to go to the education office and get the "list," which gives the names and addresses of those who have applied to the office for teachers, together with the salaries offered, and a few particulars as to requirements. From this list you select all the names you consider likely, and write to each. I wrote five the first week. In about a week's time I began to expect answers; but day after day passed, and none came. Other letters were written meantime; and long after I had given up all hopes of hearing from my first ones, answers began to arrive. Slowly I learned to have a definite conception of the size of Cape Colony and the speed of Cape mail-trains, to say nothing of allowing a week for the letter to lie in the country post-office waiting to be fetched, if it happened to have arrived just after the farmer's weekly visit there. Under these circumstances negotiations proceed but slowly, and it took six weeks to get matters settled.

CHAPTER III.

“UP-COUNTRY.”

A Cape Train—Preparations—Water-Bag—Provisions—Cape Flats—Mountains—Parcel Post—Hex River—Matjesfontein.

AT last all preliminaries are arranged ; I am to leave Cape Town, which I have been enjoying so much, and go to a Dutch farm “up-country.” “Up-country” is a general designation for anywhere lying back from the coast. In my case it necessitated a journey of eight hundred miles by train, unless I chose to go to East London by steamer, when the railway journey would be only one hundred and fifty miles. Wishing to see what I could of the country, I chose the former, and now retain the memory of the most enjoyable railway journey I ever took. The English traveller who delights in having the breath nearly shaken out of him by the London express while he devours his paper in the corner, without a thought of scenery, would find the journey nothing but a bore ; but to one who loves to hold communion with nature, I can think of no greater enjoyment than a journey on a Cape train. It jogs along so comfortably, you can admire the scenery leisurely, without making your eyes ache. It goes around such sharp curves that you can often see

both ends of the train plainly without stretching towards the window. The engines snort and puff like live things, as they toil up the steep hills ; and, had I been a good runner, I am afraid I should have jumped off the train to pick wild-flowers, and risked being able to jump on again. I have been told that a Kaffir on horseback often passes a train going uphill, but, as an old man said of his home-made bicycle, "She can go fast when it's downhill."

The carriages of the through trains are corridor-carriages, with platforms at each end, where you can go the better to enjoy the scenery. Each compartment will seat eight, but only accommodates six to sleep. Between the seats is a narrow table with two leaves, very convenient if you have your meals in the train. Near the top is a wide shelf, as wide as the seat, which forms the rack for nondescript luggage in the daytime and one of the berths at night. The seat itself forms another berth, and the back of the seat, which is hinged at its top, swings outward and fastens to form a third shelf between the other two.

The first preparation for the journey is booking your seat, a formality quite independent of getting your ticket. If you are travelling alone, the officials are very kind in trying to put you in a compartment with pleasant company. You travel second class if you wish to be economical ; only the coloured people go third.

Having booked my seat, the next thing was to provide eatables for the journey. Had I known of the good food, reasonable prices, and long stops at the refreshment stations, I would have taken much

less ; but I was inexperienced, so did as I was advised. I laid in provisions for three days—loaves of bread, butter, cheese, a cooked mutton-chop, and baked sweet potatoes, which are excellent cold, and some fruit. The thing that amused me immensely, but which turned out to be the most useful part of the equipment, was the water-bag. Imagine going to buy a coarse canvas bag and expecting to carry water in it ! Mine was about ten inches by twelve, sewed up all round except at one corner of the top, where a piece of glass like a bottle-neck protruded, the bag being sewn tightly round it so that it could not slip out ; this was provided with a cork. You pour water in through the bottle-neck until the bag is full. At first it leaks alarmingly, but " Hang it up, it will be all right by morning," were my instructions, and so it was. As you hang it outside on the platform of the train, a slight leakage does no harm, and the evaporation from the surface of the bag keeps the water deliciously cool.

By leaving Cape Town at 9 p.m. on Monday, travelling night and day, I could reach my destination at 8 p.m. on Wednesday ; but by so doing I should go through the Hex River Mountains in the night, and Hex River I was determined to see. In vain they tried to frighten me with stories of the exorbitant prices that were charged for sleeping accommodation, and how people sometimes spent the night rolled up in their rugs in a waiting-room. I was obstinate, and went to consult the station-master. There was only another train, which left at nine in the morning and had no through connections. However, I was allowed to go by that, leaving it

at Matjesfontein, where it would arrive at seven in the evening. There I could spend the night, and get on the train which I ought to have gone by when it came up at seven in the morning. This plan I gladly adopted, and found it most satisfactory, and, after all the dreadful stories, I got a most comfortable bed at the little hotel for half a crown!

It was Whit-Monday and a lovely day when I started. There had been several slight rains, just enough to quicken vegetation into beauty after the dry, hot summer. We soon left the dear old mountain behind and sped across the Cape Flats—miles of sand which join the Cape peninsula to the mainland. Even this monotonously level stretch was beautiful, for it was dotted with bushes of varying colour and appearance, many covered with pretty flowers, the sugar bush, or protea, being conspicuous. This bears a very beautiful flower about the size and shape of a teacup. The cup is composed of delicate pink bracts overlapping each other, which look almost like fine china. Inside the cup the true flowers are found, which are quite small and long. In the cup are drops of sweet juice, from which the bush gets its common name.

After passing through the Flats we began slowly to ascend as we approached the Drakenstein Mountains, a long range whose summits form an irregular jagged edge against the clear sky, and whose precipitous sides leave no opening through which we could pass until we had followed them about thirty miles, up to Tulbagh Road, where the scenery is very pretty, the train and road winding along close by the river's side through a very narrow rocky valley. Before

reaching this point we passed the Paarl, the great fruit-growing district in this part. For a long while we went through the vineyards, but the vines were at this season only little brown twigs. They appeared to be cut very small, and not fastened to any support. Wellington is in this part, and looked very pretty nestling at the foot of the mountains, about a mile from the station. In the shaded nooks of the mountain tops snow was visible, though the day was beautifully warm.

I was much amused as we came along by a novel method of parcel-post delivery. A gentleman who was in the same compartment as myself had a large parcel. I noticed that he tied it up very carefully, and then fastened a piece of string about a yard long securely around the middle of it. Then he began to look out from the window intently. I grew much interested, and began to look out too. After a while he went and stood by the open window in the corridor, and soon flung the parcel out of it, shouting and waving his arms to attract the attention of some workmen engaged in erecting a building at some little distance from the railway. They quickly saw him, and we could see one of them running to pick up the parcel. I laughed and said, "Is that the way you deliver parcel-post here?" "Sometimes," he answered. "It is something they need to have to-day." I have since noticed that the practice is very common; stations being generally far apart, the few who live near the railway make the best of their opportunities.

At Worcester, a pretty little town which we reached about two o'clock, we had attained an altitude

of 794 feet. In less than four hours afterwards we were 3,588 feet above sea level, most of the ascent being accomplished in going through the Hex River Mountains, where the train climbs up 2,400 feet in a distance of thirty-six miles. The mountains are grandly rugged, and the train crawls along the edges of precipitous rocks, twisting and turning like a snake. Higher and higher you mount, catching fresh views of valley and mountain peak at every turn. At one place, where the valley is much more than half of a circle, you creep along the edge of the rock on one side, and far above you, seemingly only a mile or so if you could jump across, is the road along which in about half an hour you will be travelling, and which there reaches the highest point of the present climb and passes through two very short tunnels, the only ones on the route.

After passing through these beautiful mountains, we began our journey across the Karroo, over which we travelled all the next day. It was dusk when we reached Matjesfontein; but I was conducted to a small hotel a few yards from the station, where I enjoyed a comfortable night's rest, and got up early enough to have a good look around the village before partaking of the excellent hot breakfast provided at the station refreshment room, and joining the night train as it left at about eight o'clock. The village is beautiful. It has been built by one gentleman, who owns it all. The station is a handsome one. The row of buildings nearest it comprise about half a dozen detached houses, a windmill, and a shop. A street at right angles to this contains smaller houses, a very nice schoolroom—into which I peeped,

as it was not locked—and, if I remember rightly, a little church. Trees were planted and the gardens looked green and flourishing ; but, looking away from the village, not a house or any sign of life was to be seen. Everything was substantially built of dark grey stone. I thought it a very small, though very pretty, village. I was not yet acquainted with up the country ! It is, in reality, a good-sized village.

Fontein means “fountain.” You may always know that any place ending in this designation has a good spring of water somewhere in its vicinity.

CHAPTER IV.

ACROSS THE KARROO.

Scenery—Stations—Dutch Companions—Sleeping—Awaking—
Changing Trains—New Companion —Bucks — Anthills—
Vegetation—Hill Formation—Stormberg—View—Stopping
the Train—Coloured Passengers—Country Hotel.

ABOUT seven o'clock the train came up, and, after waiting till nearly eight for breakfast, we started off across the Karroo.

The Karroo receives its name from the Karroo bush with which it is covered. From what I had read I expected to find it a monotonously flat plateau, neither beautiful nor interesting. Instead, I found it charmingly diversified ; no two hours showed it alike. Here and there were wide, flat stretches, but even then mountain ranges were plainly visible in the distance, and for the most part we were right among the hills. And such hills ! Some perfectly conical, like immense sandhills, others in terraces, others, again, looking like solid masses of rock ; all alike treeless, and nowhere a blade of grass to be seen, only bushes, bushes, of all sizes, all shades of green, growing out of the bare soil as if planted in a garden bed. The tints are lovely, and are enhanced by the varying ground colour. In some places a rich, dark red soil, now light, now nearly

black, again like the fine sand of the seashore ; and then miles of bare rock with scarcely a covering of earth. One can easily understand what dust-storms must be raised when it is windy. In places are patches of wild-flowers, acres in extent ; one of delicate pink, growing close to the ground, was spread out like a pink carpet. I saw the Karroo at its best, just awakened by the first rains ; but rains are very partial. In the afternoon we travelled for about an hour through a tract that had evidently had no showers yet. What a contrast ! Not a green thing to be seen ! The bushes were only little bundles of brown, seemingly lifeless, twigs. At one part was a river bed, dry, apparently ; but along its banks were numerous thorn trees, green and flourishing, reminding one of the Psalmist's striking comparison of the good man, like the tree planted by the river of water, whose leaf shall not wither. Though the river seemed to be dry, water slowly filters along the rocky bed through the sand which covers it. If a hole be dug down in the sand, it is soon filled with clear water. At some farms all the drinking-water is obtained in this way in dry weather.

It seemed strange to travel on hour after hour without seeing a house, a living creature, or even a fence. Once I noticed an unfenced road stretching across the country with a Cape cart jogging along it.

Beaufort West is the only town that we passed. It is situated in a rather bare part of the Karroo, but is itself very pretty. Its streets are planted with trees, and the whole aspect of the place is

clean, bright, and pleasing. Just above the town we passed the great reservoir, a little lake, in fact, edged round with trees, to which the town is indebted for its plentiful supply of water.

The stations were usually about an hour's journey apart. Many of them were stations only, and used for the purpose of refreshing the always-thirsty engine. Some stopping-places had the station and a cottage either beside or opposite, looking very bare with neither tree nor fence about it ; a few did have a fence, but none had trees. Occasionally there were half a dozen houses. One station was unique. It consisted of three railway carriages on a siding. They were not ordinary carriages, but really little rooms on wheels—a sitting-room, bedroom, and kitchen, I thought ; and between two of the carriages a large birdcage was placed. They were painted a light drab and looked very snug and comfortable. Not a house was to be seen about. Indeed, all the stations seemed destitute of neighbours, but as we left bags of letters at all, I concluded the neighbours existed somewhere. "Distance is nothing in South Africa" was remarked to me while at Cape Town, and I found it literally true ; you may have a dozen or twenty miles to go for your post if in an out-of-the-way corner. Many of these little stations I learned afterwards were for the convenience of towns lying from eight to thirty miles away. It is nothing to go several days' journey by post-cart from the railway, sometimes camping out for the night.

I wished that I had arranged to stop another night on the way, and so miss none of the scenery ; but it was too late then to alter my arrangements, so I had

to make the best of it and prepare, for the first time in my life, to spend the night in a railway carriage. I shared the compartment with a pleasant Dutch family who had been spending a month at Cape Town. The mother, who was very stout, and two daughters were with me; the father and some gentlemen friends were in the next compartment. They were well supplied with provisions, had a paraffin stove, and a little kettle in which they made their coffee. The scenery was not novel to them, so they spent much of the time between meals in reading and chatting. I noticed a good-sized Bible was among the family requisites, and that the lady was quietly reading it sometimes. The elders could not speak English, but the daughters, though evidently not in the habit of using it, could speak and understand it well. They were pleasant and sociable, and the father was particularly interested in asking questions about my voyage out, one of the daughters acting as interpreter.

I stayed out on the platform till it was getting dark and cold, for we were going through a part of the country where the hills were crowded together, and we were threading our way in and out between them.

I had chosen the middle berth, as it offered the best facilities for seeing what I could out of the window in the bright moonlight. The seat under me was used to hold what had been deposited on the top shelves, and the two girls climbed up to those. Opposite me the Dutch lady took possession of the seat, the back of which was not disturbed, the daughter having before explained to me when we

were choosing our places that the "lady was too fat" to squeeze in the small space available when all three beds were used.

Up to midnight I slept little, as I kept trying to look out of the window, especially if we stopped. At twelve we reached De Aar Junction, and all got up and went out on the platform to see what it was like. We had not undressed, only rolled up in our rugs ; the night before the Dutch girls told me they had gone to bed properly. After leaving De Aar, I began to feel really sleepy.; the "fat lady" tied a handkerchief around her head and made herself comfortable with pillow and rugs on the opposite seat. The door into the corridor was shut and fastened, and as all that side of the compartment was wood, we were quite shut off to ourselves. One daughter took the bed under me, and I thought the other climbed into the one above. A little green screen had been pulled across the light to shade it, and we settled to sleep.

After a good sound nap I awoke. It was nearly three. I was just closing my eyes again, when a knocking at our door began. "Whatever can they want, I wonder? Tickets?" I thought. The knocking continued. Somebody evidently meant to get in. The fat lady opposite showed no disposition to move, so I wriggled down my shelf far enough to unfasten the door, then lay down again. It was opened by a gentleman friend from the next compartment. He had to leave the train at the next station, and wanted to say good-bye.

The Dutch lady was wide awake instantly. A

long conversation ensued in Dutch, of which I could only understand the solitary word Bloemfontein. After shaking hands with the mother, the gentleman looked for the daughters. A hand was sleepily stretched out from beneath me ; then began a hunt for the other girl. I pointed above me ; but when I looked there she had vanished. Where could she be? Just as I was getting quite puzzled to answer that question, another hand was stretched out from beneath me, and our visitor went off. Somehow or other the two girls had squeezed into the one space, and I suppose had been too fast asleep to be easily awakened. The whole scene was so ludicrous that I laughed till I was wide awake. All the rest were awake, too. We had to change at a junction at five o'clock. The father came with his rugs from the next compartment, so we all concluded that it was best to get up and collect our things ready for removal.

Trunks are always weighed, only seventy-five pounds of luggage being allowed free ; but what you take with you in the compartment is not charged for. The quantity of boxes, hampers, bags, bundles, pillows, rugs, shawl-straps, and all kinds of non-descript articles that a compartment will accommodate "without inconvenience to other passengers," would astonish an English porter. Nobody seems to stir without a comfortable rug and pillow.

At the junction I was parted from the Dutch family. The train I now entered had no corridor carriages, so I got in an ordinary second-class compartment, which I noticed could be arranged like the others for sleeping. My companion for the

next three hours was a young Dutchman whose English vocabulary seemed only sufficient for conversation on the commonest subjects, but on these he was very communicative. He had been a long journey from the railroad, he told me, to try to buy some cattle, but had not succeeded. They are still scarce after the rinderpest. He had a beautiful white rug of Angora goatskin. Having given me an account of his journey, he proceeded to point out everything of interest as we went along. We saw, to my surprise, several groups of bucks grazing in the distance; I did not suppose they would venture so near a train. Then we passed some birds that were recommended as excellent eating. For some time I had been puzzling over little brown heaps—hundreds of them scattered about—sometimes not more than two yards apart; at last I inquired, and was told they were anthills.

We had left the Karroo, which occupies the western part of the country and receives its rain in winter, being consequently too dry and hot in summer for grass to grow; and had now reached the part which gets summer rains, so the aspect of nature was very different. Instead of bushes—though these were still plentiful—there was grass, almost dried up; but very pretty, having a peculiar faint crimson-lake tint, which I never saw about dried herbage before. This pretty grass I learned afterwards is sour grass; it is fit for cattle when just springing, but not when old. Good grass goes yellow when dried up, as that in England does.

Vegetation had changed, but the great hills and mountains were still the same. There is something

very strange about South African hills—everywhere there is a similarity of feature. Lines exactly parallel and always horizontal extend along their sides, sometimes miles in length, but also along the smaller hills if these are high enough. The lines are always a good height up; and many hills are divided into terraces at these lines, so that their outlines are like steps. Some of the hills are topped by a stratum of rock, flat at the top, but whose sides are perpendicular, so that no one has yet been able to get on the top of many of them. I hardly know how to describe the general appearance; it struck me like this (but please understand that I am not speaking scientifically, as my knowledge of geology is very meagre); but it appeared as if our English hills, and those that I have seen in America, were old, had been exposed to the action of the elements for thousands of years, and so had been worn and rounded, or, even where they have been strong enough to resist their foes, their valleys and glens have been perfected. Here it all seems new, as if it had been lifted from the sea-bottom very recently, and had been raised little by little, each successive rise being marked by the strange lines around the hills, which the surface of the ocean would make, as they peeped above it while its currents were depositing the curious conical sandhills and tracks of sand and heaps of pebbles which are to be found on level parts everywhere. This is just how it looks to me, and as if it had not been above the sea long enough for the atmosphere to have materially affected it. Never have I seen such stones! The mountain

sides, where not precipitous, are covered with them—great boulders as large as houses, and lesser ones among them lying heaped together, till it seems as if some of the large hills were really made of them. There is very little soil on the hills, the heavy rains washing it down, so vegetation generally is scanty. The thorn tree is the most common on these high plateaus. It does not exceed the hawthorn in size. Every branch is covered with long, sharp spines or thorns. The leaf is small ; in summer it bears a sweet yellow flower.

All the morning we were twisting in and out among the mountains, but always mounting up. There were more signs of life than on the Karroo : here and there a house in the distance, and cattle in the fields. As we rose higher the hills looked very bleak and bare, for we were now crossing the Stormberg Mountains, which extend like a great wall for miles across the country, from east to west, about two hundred miles from the coast. The railroads being so few, my journey had been very roundabout. As far as De Aar I had been going north-east ; from that point I had to go east and south, so approaching the coast. At Stormberg Junction I had to change again. We had here reached an elevation of 5,320 feet, and the surroundings were desolate and bleak-looking. Right opposite the station was a bare, stony mountain peak, on the side of which was the name in immense white letters, formed, I was told, by whitewashing the stones on the hillside. It was the Queen's birthday, and the station was prettily decorated with greens and flags in honour of the occasion.

After winding among the mountain peaks for about an hour, we came out on the southern side of the range, and began a winding descent along its precipitous sides. The view was indescribably grand. The plateau on which Queenstown stands lay a thousand feet below us. Its mountains and valleys and river beds spread out like a map at our feet, with all the wonderful tints and shades of brown that only South Africa can furnish, while here and there, in some well-watered section, was a patch of lovely green. How I wished that train would go down hill as slowly as up! but it did not, and soon we were speeding over the plateau, threading our way among its kopjes (pronounced koppies), which is the word here for hills, and by six o'clock had reached Queenstown.

A laughable incident occurred at one of the little stations. The train started, and at once the station-master whistled—I thought for the train to stop again. But the engine-driver never heard, and kept on. The station-master whistled again, but still in vain. I put my head out of the window to watch. He was evidently getting excited. We were out of the station by this time, and he was running after us, whistling loudly. At last he succeeded in bringing the train to a stand. Then I discovered the cause of the stoppage. A gentleman and a little boy came running from the station, panting and bare-headed. The train usually made fairly long stops at every station, and they had evidently expected it to stay longer there, so had got out, and very nearly been left behind; which, when there is no other train till next morning, is not quite desirable.

At another little station were a number of coloured people, dressed in their best European style, evidently going to keep up the Queen's birthday in town. One woman amused me much. She evidently had a sore foot, and could not put on a shoe, as one foot was bare, except for a large white bandage. Had the other been bare also, she would have been quite comfortable, but she had been taking lessons from the "white folks," and pride outweighed comfort, so she was hobbling about comically with "one shoe off, and the other shoe on"!

As I had to go beyond Queenstown, it was nearly eight o'clock when I reached my destination. A Cape cart was awaiting me, and less than half an hour's drive brought me to the little hotel where I was to spend the night. In the morning some one was to conduct me to the farm of Mrs. Van Droon, the lady who had engaged me.

I was taken into the dining-room, where the mistress was lolling on the sofa, the picture of lazy shiftlessness—as many women are here, I find. She never got up, but let her husband, who had brought me from the station, show me to my room! All there was clean and comfortable, and I enjoyed a good night's sleep.

CHAPTER V.

MY FIRST DRIVE.

Looking Around—Post-Cart—My Equipage—Cape Carts—My Driver—Stones—Sunbonnets—Rocks—Aloes—Thorn Trees—Farm Roads—Stuck in the Mud.

IN the morning I had ample time to look around. The house stood in the narrow passage between two hills, called a “nek,” which designation forms the final syllable in the name of a place so situated. The house had the appearance of an ordinary dwelling. A tiny flower garden was fenced off in front of it, and on the verandah were stands filled with plants, the maiden-hair ferns being particularly pretty. But the general effect was spoiled, as I found it was everywhere, by the ugly receptacles in which the plants were grown. You see no plant-pots here; everything is put in tins; square ones, something like biscuit-tins, which are bought filled with paraffin oil, being favourites,—but all are alike ugly. There were several outbuildings, which apparently furnished additional bedrooms. Opposite was the stable, and beyond it a high oval hill, beautifully terraced to the top.

This hotel, being on the road between Queenstown and Kaffirland, was a stopping-place for commercial travellers. Two, who had been staying for the

night, started off in their post-cart, drawn by four horses, after breakfast. Never have I seen so many boxes and bales stowed away in one conveyance ; so full was it that the two travellers were seated each on the top of one of their boxes.

It was about eleven o'clock when my escort came, and I was getting rather tired of waiting, for it was bitterly cold out of doors, and though there was a wood fire on the hearth in the dining-room, I could see I was wanted out of the way when breakfast was over, so wandered about the parlour and verandah, amusing myself as best I could.

Mrs. Van Droon's eldest son, Bert, and a younger brother came for me, in a very shabby-looking Cape cart with two miserable-looking horses. I found afterwards that one was borrowed ; and as neighbours do not much care to lend their horses to those who will not take care of their own, and would rather borrow than buy, they naturally got the worst.

The Cape cart is the only vehicle in common use here. It is much like an American "buggy," but larger and stronger. It holds four, having two seats. Its cover, which is white lined with black, can be pushed down behind, but is usually up, as a shelter from sun or wind. You read of people travelling by post-cart here—that is, one of these Cape carts which carries passengers. The amount of luggage that they will hold is astonishing. The back seat is really the lid of the large box extending under it, and at the back is a strong rack for boxes or bundles, while various articles are generally tucked in about one's feet in every corner. As a Cape cart has only two wheels it needs to be carefully

loaded, so that the weight of the pole may balance nicely on the backs of the horses.

A ride in a Cape cart is indescribable ; it must be experienced to be appreciated. I am inclined to think the Cape cart deserves some of the praise lavished upon the climate for the cure of invalids. Fortunately, there are several places at the sides where you can hold on, when you become experienced enough to see the necessity for so doing. On an English turnpike road the Cape cart would be enjoyable, but the roads here are not turnpikes in any sense of smoothness, though, considering the distances at which places lie apart, they are not at all bad ; but my driver was, I think, the most reckless I ever drove with. No matter how wide the road, if there is a big stone anywhere on it, over that stone the wheel goes ; then up rises one side of the cart suddenly into the air (springs are a reality in these vehicles), bang goes your head against one side of the top, or against your companion's head, if there are two of you on the seat—sometimes first one, then the other, if the second wheel goes over a stone just after the first and before you have had time to recover your equilibrium. But wait till both wheels go over some obstacle at once when the horses are trotting !—up flies the cart, and up fly you, like an indiarubber ball, high out of your seat, your head probably coming into collision with the cart roof ; then down you come on your seat again in a manner that makes you wish you were an indiarubber ball in reality. After a few experiences of this kind you learn to hold on very tightly and to keep a good look-out on the state of the road as well as on the scenery.

Do you wonder how my hat fared throughout these experiences? I was wearing a sunbonnet instead, fortunately. Everybody has sunbonnets here. I bought mine purposely for the journey—they are so much more comfortable than a hat. Even in Cape Town you often see people from the country driving in in their white sunbonnets. Almost all are white; very elaborate affairs, too, are some of them, with tucks and shirring, and ruffles and embroidery. There is much difference in both shape and ornamentation, some being prettier than others; but to most people they are becoming, and certainly comfortable.

The road was fairly level and the country very pretty. We wound among great kopjes covered with immense stones—ironstone, of a rich brown hue on the outside, but, if broken, dark within. Many of the stones had a most peculiar appearance; they were all over little pits, as if you had taken your finger and dented them while they were soft. These marks are only on one side of the stone, not always the top; but the stones may have been moved since the marks were made. Among these stones on the hillsides grew bushes and a few scattered trees, and on some were hundreds of bitter aloes, their long spikes of bright red flowers contrasting beautifully with the brown rocks. At one part was a large stretch of open country covered with thorn trees, not like a wood at all, as the trees were not so close together, the ground being covered with grass. The trees were not large; but it was the first time I had seen so many together, and the scene, with the mountains beyond, was very pretty. One

peculiarity of it was the strong feeling that it awakened of being in proximity to the sea ; though you knew it was miles away you felt you must see the ocean somewhere in the distance to make the picture complete.

Before going far we left the main road, which went on across the Kei River to Kaffir territory, and proceeded by the farm roads. These, instead of joining places of any importance together, merely lead on from farm to farm. It seemed so strange to drive for miles along a road with no fences on either side, nothing to keep you off the grass ; indeed, there were some places where the road had become worn and the grass by its side had been driven over instead. When you reached the boundary of two farms, there was a fence and a large wooden gate across the road, which the boy who was with us had to open and shut again. The horses know these gates well, and scarcely need stopping before and after them.

We had twenty miles to drive, and before we had reached our journey's end the horses were so tired we could hardly get them along. Very near to the last house on our way a little stream of water ran across the road, and the horses insisted on stopping to drink. By so doing they got one wheel into a little mud-hole, and when they tried to start could not pull it out again. Fortunately, two men and a Kaffir boy were near, so they helped us out ; but, just as we were starting again, our blundering driver pulled the reins the wrong way and nearly overturned the cart among some big stones by the roadside.

The strength of these Cape carts is wonderful ;

any civilised vehicle would be a wreck in half a dozen journeys with the usage some of them get.

After nearly four hours we drove around the last hill and could see the house which was to be my home about half a mile ahead, at the side of an oval valley surrounded by hills. It was built on the higher part of gently sloping ground, and looked clean and white, but very bare and comfortless.

CHAPTER VI.

ON A DUTCH FARM.

My Reception—The Last Governess—The Best Room—My Room—The Dining-Room—Meals—Fruit—Coffee—Water—Kitchen—Cold Evenings—The Brazier—School—Callers—Visiting—Orange Trees—Sunday's.

WE stopped at the side of the house, which was a plain structure of one storey, with a corrugated iron roof, verandah in front, and a very small garden, which had evidently been fenced off and dug up recently—I imagined in honour of my arrival.

My reception was rather comical. Mr. Bert escorted me in by the front door, inside which his mother stood to receive me. He ceremoniously introduced her as “Mrs. Van Droon,” not “My mother.” We shook hands, she bowing her head in a dignified style to everything I said. She understood English very well, but would never speak it. Soon she disappeared with her son into the dining-room—I thought, to hear his opinion as to my probable fitness for the situation.

They had been without a teacher for six months, and I afterwards learned that their last attempt to get one had been quite a failure, the young lady

whom they got spending most of the two days she stayed in crying, saying she was ill, and then getting the neighbouring farmer to take her back to the station. They called at the hotel where I spent the night, and there she learned that they were having a dance that evening, so, instead of going on to the station, stayed there and danced all night !

Being left alone in the best room, I amused myself by inspecting its contents. It was a fair-sized square apartment, with one window and the front door opening on the verandah. On the opposite side was a door leading into the dining-room. Two small bedrooms opened from it at one side, and one from the other. There was a fireplace, which was shut in ; I learned afterwards that it smoked, so was never used.

The room was carpeted and also had white goat-skin rugs laid about the floor. There was a sofa and chairs with old-fashioned antimacassars. On the table and mantel were a curious assemblage of new and out-of-date ornaments. On the walls hung a few framed pictures, and a variety of gaudy almanacs advertising cigarette makers and the various provision merchants of the neighbouring towns.

The report received being satisfactory, as I judged from the appearance of Mrs. Van Droon's face, she returned and showed me to my room—one of the tiny ones adjoining. It was just wide enough for a single bed to stand at the end opposite the door. A dressing-table occupied one corner by the door, my trunk the other ; the washstand taking up most

of the space between that and the bed ; leaving me just room to turn round comfortably in the middle. The one window was on the front of the house, and in winter got no sun, as it was under the verandah, and the room had a miserably chilly feeling. All the floors were of earth beaten hard and oiled. They had the appearance of chocolate-coloured linoleum, but were very cold. The ceilings were all of natural wood varnished.

Dinner was soon ready. The dining-room was long and plain. A door opposite the one from the best room opened outside ; a small window was near it. At one end a door opened into the small kitchen, at the other was a bedroom, screened by a curtain, which was seldom drawn. A cupboard, chairs, a bench under the window, the table, and some more bright almanacs on the walls completed the furniture. Dinner was served in a homely, but by no means rude, fashion, and the behaviour at table was quite as good as that of country people in England.

Dinners throughout the winter vary little. There was always pumpkin, which is just boiled and eaten as a vegetable ; occasionally a few potatoes, oftener rice, sometimes rice and pumpkin boiled together and flavoured with cinnamon ; now and then boiled "mealies." As they kept sheep, our meat was always mutton. On the Karroo, in many places, where only goats are kept, it is their flesh that is eaten. Beef you seldom taste, and, if you do, have no desire to taste it again soon. Young beasts are worth more alive than dead, so it is only the old oxen that are killed, and their flesh is nearly as

tough and tasteless as leather. Mutton is very good, not at all fat, but very fine in flavour.

It was very rarely that we had anything in the shape of pudding, and what meat and vegetables were left at dinner we had cold for tea, with the addition of bread-and-butter—or, rather, I had butter, and the rest usually mutton fat. Now and then we had jam.

Breakfast varied; sometimes only bread-and-butter, but oftener meat as well, and excellent porridge, made of the bread-flour boiled in milk and water.

Country bread here is delicious; none of your insipid white flour, out of which all taste and nutriment has been sifted, nor rough, coarse meal, which, however palatable, is not always acceptable to delicate stomachs. The flour is fine and smooth, making bread of a delicate light brown. This is rendered all the sweeter by being baked in the large brick oven.

I expected to find this a land of fruit; never was I more disappointed. It is plentiful just in summer if neither late frosts, hail, drought, nor locusts have destroyed it. But if they have, the farmer must go without, as he depends entirely on his own supply and that of his near neighbours. It does not pay to send fruit to market unless the grower lives very close to the town, so, as far as I could hear, fruit is scarce and dear in all towns. It is so at Cape Town, and of very inferior quality often. Grapes are twopence a pound for a little while, but against that you can put twopence-halfpenny for an ordinary-sized orange, and a penny apiece for little apples

you would not look at in England. I did not see an apple all the time I was up the country.

We had three meals—breakfast at eight, dinner at one, tea at six, or sometimes seven ; but do not suppose this represents all the refreshment taken. The Dutch are very fond of coffee, and begin the day by drinking a cup as soon after rising as they can get hot water, and I should not like to guess how many cups they drink throughout the day. Whenever a visitor drops in, a cup is poured out for him, some of the family likewise partaking of one, and I often found Mrs. Van Droon and her son Bert with a cup of coffee before them when there had been no callers : indeed, I came to the conclusion that to sit and drink coffee was their idea of perfect enjoyment. In the case of Mr. Bert it was always accompanied by a pipe.

The house stood on a gentle slope facing the east. Near the south end was a round, thatched hut which was used for a store-room. Behind the house was the oblong building which served for the schoolroom, and at the north end of it was a long shed and walled yard, where the sheep were often put at night. The absence of outbuildings and fenced yards about the houses makes these South African farms look very comfortless and unfarm-like. The hills all around the valley were bare and stony, but at the opposite end was a pretty oasis—a white farmhouse surrounded by trees, a garden, and green fields. The mountain stream had been turned from its course and made to irrigate the land. Though this arrangement is beautiful, it is not always the best for health ; so, usually, the houses

stand alone and bare, while the garden and irrigated land is some little distance away.

I was rather horrified to find that our drinking-water came from the remnants of this same stream, which flowed on through the valley, but, at the time I was there, it was reduced to a series of pools—abounding in frogs and green vegetation—connected by very tiny streamlets. I asked if they were ever without water, and was assured that it had always rained before the stream quite dried up. I concluded that a study of animalculæ and the germ theory was not a desirable preparation for a sojourn in South Africa. I learned later that this was a supply of water not to be despised, some farms having much worse. All the water was carried to the house in a large pail by the Kaffir woman. It was about five minutes' walk slightly uphill, yet, though she had a fat baby on her back, I never saw her pause to rest nor seem tired when she lifted the pail down from her head in the kitchen.

The kitchen was a dirty little hole, with which I found it advisable to become as slightly acquainted as possible; it had no window—the open door answering instead. The fireplace was formed by a stone step which occupied all the wide chimney. In the middle of this a tiny wood fire was made, and there, somehow or other, all the cooking was done, with the exception of what needed baking, for which the brick oven, whose door opened into the back of the chimney, was used. Several times when bread was short for breakfast we had excellent scones baked on a little gridiron over the glowing wood embers. The part of the hearth



MY FIRST SCHOOL.



A FARM HOUSE.

away from the fire was often utilised by the Kaffir woman as a seat, and, had it been a little cleaner, I should often have liked to share it, for it was the only comfortable-looking corner there was on a cold day.

I knew that this part was colder than generally supposed, but was quite unprepared for the degree of cold I experienced. My room always felt like a vault ; and the best room, which was usually shut up, was little better, neither of them getting the sun. Water was often frozen over at night. I got up half-frozen in the morning, dressed as quickly as I could, went out of doors, and stood in the sunniest corner to warm up before breakfast. By ten o'clock it was as warm as an ordinary English summer day, unless it were cloudy, in which case it continued cold all day. Then there was nothing to be done but wrap up and make the best of it. The evenings were invariably miserable. As soon as the sun goes down it is cold. A few farmers have a wood fire on the hearth in the sitting-room, but most manage without ; wood is generally scarce and, eight o'clock being bed-time, evenings are short. When a room gets the sun in well through the day, it keeps warm for awhile if shut up at sunset ; but this house had small windows and stood the wrong way, so it never did get warmed properly, and the bare earth floor of the dining-room, where we always sat in the evening, made it colder. It was not I only who felt the cold ; we all had shawls or jackets on. Several times the folks tried to warm the room a little by means of a brazier. An extra fire of wood was made on the kitchen hearth, and when burnt through

the red coals were put into a brass brazier which was placed in the middle of the floor, and we sat around it, warming our hands and feet. As all the fumes of the charcoal came into the room, I consider it was just as well that we usually managed without it.

As I never could stand cold, and the winter was only beginning, I concluded that I must try my fortune elsewhere. I had come partly for health, so it was useless to stay where I was sure to get harm rather than good. Mrs. Van Droon was very kind, and it was arranged that I should leave within a month.

Notwithstanding various other little drawbacks, I managed to enjoy my stay. The schoolroom was very pleasant. It had a small porch, covered with the only green climber about the place, and three windows, so it got the sun nicely and was usually warm. It was a good-sized room, with the oiled earth floor and a ceiling made of coarse canvas or sail-cloth. A long table extended down the middle of the room, with forms on each side; at the end was my chair. There were several book-shelves, with some good school books and two useful wall maps. It would have accommodated twenty scholars comfortably; but it was the winter holidays when I went, and it had been agreed that I should teach for my board only, till they were over. Mrs. Van Droon's children were my only scholars for that time, so my work was very easy. Out of school hours I amused myself as I liked.

On the first Saturday after my arrival the governess from a farm four miles away came over on horseback

to see me, and I afterwards spent from Friday afternoon until Sunday afternoon with her. She was a lively, talkative little lady of colonial birth. I was told that her mother belonged to the English aristocracy, from whence, probably, she derived her affability and pleasant self-conceit. She was the best-educated person I met with in the country parts. People here generally seem to know nothing beyond South Africa. I believe she was a good teacher. For a farm school she had a large one—twenty-one scholars: six belonged to the farm where she boarded, some to neighbouring farms, and others, living too far off to go back and forth daily, were weekly boarders at the farms near. There are all sorts of contrivances to get children educated. One family I know of hire two rooms at a village ten miles from their home, and send all the children there from Monday to Friday, under the care of an older sister.

My visit was most enjoyable. My host was a well-to-do Dutchman, his wife English; their children were nicely trained and well behaved. It was the best farm I had seen, thoroughly irrigated, and having a large and well-stocked fruit and flower garden. The house was spacious and convenient, though only of one storey; the rooms large and lofty, with board floors; and in the evenings a bright wood fire burnt in the dining-room, so that it was very comfortable. The adjacent garden and a few trees near gave it a pleasant appearance as seen from without.

Here I saw for the first time orange trees loaded with fruit. It is not just the climate for them, the nights being too cold; but they do well in sheltered situations if they can be kept free from the scale

insect, which is very troublesome. Though the oranges are good, they have not the delicious flavour of those fresh gathered in warmer climates. The trees are very beautiful—their dark green glossy leaves being set thickly together, so that the outline of the tree is very smooth and regular, much like an old straw beehive in shape, only higher in proportion to the width. The golden oranges are thickly studded over the whole, and show beautifully on the dark green background. The foliage of the lemon tree is of a lighter green, and they do not grow so compactly as the orange, so are not quite so beautiful.

Never shall I forget the kindly hospitality which I enjoyed at that farm, nor the pleasant Sunday morning when all the family gathered around the dining-table to read God's Word, and afterwards went to the parlour, where the piano was, to sing hymns together.

My other Sundays were rather monotonous. Church was fourteen miles away, and of course we could not go without horses. The boys often went off hunting ; the girls seemed to find something extra to do in the house. I used to go up on the hillside out of the way, and sit and read ; sometimes the youngest girl would join me, but I could never get any of the others to do so. At the pretty farmhouse across the valley a Sunday-school class was held in the afternoons, in Dutch, to which the children generally went.

The elder girl could speak English well, the younger ones were picking it up with remarkable rapidity, but I could not get them to use it among

themselves. What they said to me was in English, but everything else was spoken in Dutch. This had two disadvantages—it made one feel rather lonely not to understand anything that was being said, and it prevented the good and bad traits of the children from being readily discovered.

CHAPTER VII.

DUTCH PEOPLE.

The Family—Boer Character—A Governess's Experience—A Dutch Neighbour—Teachers—Snake-Killing—Dutch Court-ing—Bible-Reading—Poor Springs.

PERHAPS you would like to hear something more of this family, and what I have learned of the Dutch people in general.

Mrs. Van Droon was a widow, fat, lazy, affable to strangers, but possessed of a sharp voice that seemed often to be employed in scolding the younger children, with whom she was very severe, though her eldest son was almost ruined by indulgence. Whether Mrs. Van Droon lamented her widowhood I cannot say; from all accounts her husband had not been exactly a model one. For some years they lived, as many poor farmers do, in a mud hut, just like the Kaffirs. After a time Mr. Van Droon built a large stone shed for the goats. A neighbour remarked that it would have been much more fitting if he had built a better house for his wife and family. "Oh, if I lose my wife I can get another any day," he answered; "but I cannot buy more goats if I lose them."

Mr. Bert, who was just of age, was, in his mother's

eyes, perfection ; to all others he appeared a selfish, lazy, conceited fellow, whose ideas of manliness were expressed by smoking, swearing, and riding about on other people's horses when he could borrow them. The next son was very quiet ; then came my eldest scholar, a thoughtful boy of sixteen ; then a girl of thirteen, a boy of ten, and a girl of nine, the nicest dispositioned of the family. You have no idea how awkward it is trying to teach children who do not half understand the language they are being taught in ; but they got on wonderfully well. They were all clever and anxious to learn ; but try to show them any fault in their work, ever so kindly, they were indignantly sulky, while praise made them only more conceited.

I have often been able better to understand the character of parents through teaching their children, and my experiences with this family have helped me much in understanding the faults and latent possibilities of the Boers. In a garden a few large weeds may hide and almost smother a number of beautiful plants ; could the weeds be removed and the garden cultivated, it would soon be transformed into a thing of beauty. So it is, I think, with Boer character ; several bad traits are conspicuous, but there are possibilities of good. An educated colonial gentleman thus summed up the Boer character for me : " Educate a Dutchman and have patience with him, and you can get him to do anything ; but he will never be driven." Education, religious and intellectual, is the great need all over South Africa. Mrs. Van Droon's family represent the lazy, self-satisfied Dutch, who are quite content with life as

they find it, without making any effort to improve ; yet there was, even in this family, material for the building of splendid characters, if they could only have been properly trained and educated.

All the governments are, I believe, doing their best of late years to provide facilities for education ; but there are many obstacles in the way. Boarding-schools are very expensive ; only really well-off farmers can afford them. Few good teachers will go to the small, out-of-the-way farm schools—they can get more money and greater comforts elsewhere. Three months with and six months without a teacher is no uncommon experience with these farm children, and half the teachers are little good. Mrs. Van Droon's last teacher, a young man from Holland, got intoxicated very often, and when unable to teach anything else, used to set the children map-drawing. Drink seems to be an awful curse in South Africa, and drunken teachers are numerous.

Before we judge the Boers harshly let us try to picture to ourselves the life they have lived and the disadvantages under which they have laboured. Some sixty years ago, already inured to the hardships of colonial life, they journeyed miles away from Cape Colony, across an unknown country, inhabited by wild beasts and sometimes wilder men, in search of a spot which they could call their own and where they could govern themselves according to their own liking. These men, with their children and grandchildren, form the Boers of to-day, who have been taught from their birth to despise luxury and love a free and primitive life. Surrounded by savages hostile and treacherous,

their natural prudence and cautiousness have been warped into deceitfulness and suspiciousness, and the steadfastness of purpose which sustained them throughout years of peril has also made the remembrance of any supposed wrong to be long brooded over, all the more so because their isolated life has brought few new thoughts to engage their attention.

It is only ten years since the railway entered their territory and so made the outside world easily accessible. I am afraid that, seated snugly in your comfortable home, influenced even without effort of your own by the architecture, the science, the religion, and the civilisation around, you will find it impossible to realise what it is to live year after year cut off from them all. Imagine yourselves with a family of children to bring up, miles from a railway, a school, or a church. Your next neighbour may be several miles away, but, far or near, he knows no more of the remoter world than yourself. If some whispers of its doings occasionally reach you, they have been so long on the way and the region they come from has begun to seem so hazy and distant, that the some-time news excites little interest, and in the children, who have never seen beyond their own little corner, none. Sheep, cattle, natives, snake-killing, hunting—these take up more and more of your thoughts. Your children have no teacher, no trainer but yourself; your own faults will largely be their faults, and for the very reason that they are your own, you will be, in great measure, blind to them, and they will not be checked as they should be. You teach your children to read and reverence the Bible; but this isolated life has

degenerated their language and limited their vocabulary. They read, but there is very much that they do not understand. Do you wonder, then, that many grow up hypocrites? Sit down and try to realise what it would be, what it would do, one generation of this life, then two, then three, and can you not begin to see the causes of many of the shortcomings of the Boers?

Now, at last, civilisation overtakes them. Many of this generation have enjoyed the advantages of a fair education, and what is the result? We know the effect that a small amount of knowledge has upon the children of ignorant parents, even in England. Can we wonder that conceit and arrogance are rife among many young Dutchmen who know immeasurably more than their ancestors—in their own estimation—and have no opportunities of discovering how small their stock of knowledge really is? It is increased education and culture that lead to wisdom and humility.

Let me tell you the experiences of a governess who went to a Dutch farm in the Transvaal only a few years ago. The story was told me by one of her intimate friends, for whose veracity I can vouch. This governess, a lady by birth and education, was driven by reverse of fortune to earn her own living. She came to Cape Town and obtained a situation in the Transvaal, a very good salary and her fare from Cape Town being offered. She went; but what was her dismay to find a house entirely destitute of the refinements of civilisation, and her bedroom only separated from that of the master and mistress by a partition not reaching to

the roof, so that every sound could be heard between the two.

The children had just had new dresses bought for them, and at breakfast next morning appeared in them, with rough heads, unwashed faces, and no pinafores. Their mother mildly suggested that they had better put their old dresses on ; but they only pulled faces and kept on the new ones. On the table was plenty of good food, but things seemed to have been put on the first dish that came handy, and were just stacked on the table anyhow. A roast fowl was half-cut, half-torn in pieces, the children eating their share with their fingers, as they had always seen the natives do, drops of grease besmearing the nice clean dress fronts, one girl also plentifully anointing hers with cream. No such luxuries as serviettes were thought of. The furniture of the house was good, but things were set down anywhere, with no attempt at comfort or elegance. The prospect was very discouraging, and what could this lady do? She was there without means ; and she bravely determined to make the best of it. She soon found out that all the family were passionately fond of music, and little by little she induced the children to do as she wished by rewarding them with a tune, as she was a splendid player and they had a good piano. She delighted the mother by draping the curtains prettily, and arranging the beautiful ferns and wild-flowers tastefully in little vases about the room. By tact and patience she won her way with them all. The children were taught to keep themselves neat and clean, and to undress at night, instead of often lying down to sleep

in their clothes. The parents began to ask advice about many household matters. They had more money than they knew what to do with ; but born and brought up on a lonely farm, with no opportunities of education or culture, they had no idea of either the manners or style of living in civilised life. But now that the opportunity had come, they were delighted to learn. This lady taught them how to set the table nicely and to behave properly at it. Stocks of table-linen and bed-linen were bought, and many improvements made in the household management. An addition was built to the house, so that she had a nice large room to herself ; and when, three years later, she had money left her, so that she was able to give up the situation and return to England, she left a refined and well-managed household. It was a wonderful task to accomplish, demanding more tact, patience, and perseverance than most of us, I fear, possess. On the other hand, does it not show us that the Dutch are wonderfully capable of improvement if we only approach them in the right way?

One afternoon I went with Mrs. Van Droon to visit a Dutch family living over a mile away. One of the twin babies was ill, and we went to see it. They lived in a little oblong cottage, of two rooms really, but part of the larger one was curtained off, so that practically there were three—a living room in the middle and a bedroom at each end. The walls were formed of wood and interlaced twigs plastered over with mud, the roof being thatch, to which you looked up from the inside, there being no ceiling ; and, of course, mud floors. The door opened into the

middle of the living-room, on the opposite side of which was a tiny window. The bedroom had another tiny window, and was only big enough to hold two double beds, leaving very little space to walk between them. We did not go into the other bedroom, but it would be similar. The living-room would be about as big again, the dining-table and three forms taking up half of it. A round hut close by was the kitchen, so there was no fire-place in the rooms. In this little house a man, wife, and seven children seemed to live quite comfortably. You must remember that life here is mostly spent out of doors, houses being for the most part places to eat and sleep in.

The eldest daughter was a handsome, well-behaved young woman, who could speak English fluently. The eldest son, a very ordinary-looking boy of fifteen, had just passed well in a rather stiff junior examination for which he had only been preparing six months ; and to utter ignorance of grammar and geography, when he began the preparation, must be added a very imperfect knowledge of English. His teacher, the pleasant little governess I have mentioned, was astonished at his cleverness, and said she had never met an English boy who could have done anything like it.

Here we have an example, by no means exceptional, of an industrious Dutch family who are determined to get on and rise in the world.

If the opportunities of learning from books are limited, their outdoor life gives the children education of another sort. I was surprised one day to find how skilful the youngest boy was in snake-killing.

I saw one lying in the path, and called to him to come and see if it were a poisonous one. He said it was, and, looking around, selected a sharp, flat stone, which he deliberately threw and cut the snake's head clean off.

I was greatly amused while at Mrs. Van Droon's by some Dutch courting I witnessed. Dutchmen marry young, and Mr. Bert was quite old enough to select a wife. I was told that company was coming to stay a few days. Mr. Bert with some difficulty borrowed a horse, went off to the station, and returned with a hearty, buxom Dutch girl, who, I was not long in discovering, was his lady-love. Dutch ideas seem to differ somewhat from English ones in the matter, at any rate in this case. Miss Susanna did a very fair share of the courting, though she was by no means immodest or bold; just a rough, good-natured country girl, who would make a much better wife than Mr. Bert deserved. She had the greasy, slightly sallow complexion that so many of the Dutch, even the children, possess, the result of gross food, coffee, and a not too frequent acquaintance with soap and water.

Various amusing episodes occurred, not the least being Mrs. Van Droon's smilingly complacent approval of the proceedings. It certainly was nothing amiss in her eyes that a girl should very openly express her admiration for the young man she expects to marry. The most ludicrous incident occurred one evening. I had a spelling-game—loose cardboard letters which we used to spread out on the table and make words of. Mr. Bert was away on this evening. We were all seated around the

table, and began the game ; but Miss Susanna did not take kindly to it. She began making a sentence of the letters, and soon produced this effusion, "Dear Bert, love Susanna ; she loves you." The rest of the family looked on with unbounded admiration ; Mrs. Van Droon's face showing that she considered it a marvellous production, and in English, too ! I had hard work to keep a straight face ; but the climax was reached a few minutes later, when Miss Susanna, in her absorption forgetting the nearness of the candle—always our only light—leaned a little too far over it, and suddenly there was a blaze of frizzed hair, which, fortunately for her good looks, she at once clapped her hands over and extinguished. We all had a good laugh, which I was very thankful to have an excuse for enjoying.

Though this family was by no means a religious one, they maintained the good old Dutch custom of family Bible-reading. Before we went to bed, a Dutch hymn was sung to an old-fashioned half-chant tune that I much liked to hear ; there was something grand and dignified about it. Then a chapter was read from the old Dutch Bible, and a prayer from a book of devotions. Here, I am sorry to say, the matter seemed to end, no one considering that the chapter wanted to be wrought into the life ; but, as I said before, probably none of the children understood fully what was read to them.

There can be formal Bible-reading as well as formal church-going ; but all Dutch religion is not by any means of this stamp. Several English gentlemen have told me that some of the most devoted Christians they ever met were Boers.

All the Dutch are careful to observe one phase of practical Christianity. They believe that the second chapter of St. James was written for our instruction and guidance, even in this nineteenth century ; therefore a Dutchman never looks down on his poor relations. The poorest and shabbiest may go to a rich relative's house, sure always of as cordial a welcome as if he were as well off as themselves.

They believe that God meant the gifts of nature for the use of all, so far as possible. The mineral springs of the Transvaal are owned by the Government, and it has erected baths which are entirely free to all who wish to use them ; so that the poorest man may have the same chance as the richest of deriving benefit from the waters.

CHAPTER VIII.

FARM LIFE.

The House — Veld—Aloe Kraal—Visitors—News—Sickness—
Post — Post Town — Church—Irrigation — Mealies—Cala-
bash Milk — Kaffir Beer—Kaffir Corn — Ox Waggons—
Transport Waggons—Treking—Fences.

I OBTAINED board at a neighbouring farm, thinking that in two or three weeks I should meet with another situation ; but my stay lasted over two months. It was very pleasant to get on a real farm with plenty of farm life and interest.

The house, built of sun-dried bricks plastered over and whitewashed, occupied two sides of a quadrangle ; a stable, storeroom, milkroom, and cartshed, all of the same height and style as the house, occupied the third side, while a high wall ran across the fourth, excepting the large gateway in the middle. A wide verandah ran all along the house inside the quadrangle. This served for a passage way, as every room had a door opening on to it, some also being connected with the adjacent rooms by doors within. The windows were all on the opposite side of the building, looking out on the veld. In the middle of the yard grew a large locust tree, around which a raised circular mound made a pretty little garden bed. Another small corner by the verandah contained

flowers, and passion and Madeira vines, that trailed over one end of the verandah ; the rest of the yard was quite bare, its surface being the natural rock covered here and there with a little earth. The house was not pretty, but it was thoroughly convenient and comfortable ; and you could generally find some corner of the sunny yard where you were sheltered from the winds, which were sometimes bitterly cold. Of course you could only see out in one direction, but the view was a very pretty one. Not many steps below, for the house was built on sloping ground, was a pond with willow trees, and close below that the large garden, while farther on we could see the veld, and hills beyond.

“Veld” is a very convenient word here ; it means an open plain, and is applied to any flat, or fairly flat, piece of land. It may be large or quite small in extent ; it may be covered with grass or bushes, or be almost bare ; it is “veld” all the same.

About five minutes' walk off was a pretty, red-brick house, the home of a married son of my host. Midway between the two was an aloe kraal, which I admired much. The large aloes that I had noticed at Cape Town, with leaves some eight feet long, had here been planted side by side to enclose a large square yard. They grew crowded together, their great leaves interlocking, and young plants springing around the old. Among them here and there was a bitter aloe, its strong, thick stem some eight feet high, bearing a crest of leaves somewhat resembling the top of a pineapple, but larger, and long spikes of bright red flowers, which contrasted prettily with the pale green of the other aloes. They formed a fence at

once strong and beautiful, but nevertheless somewhat dangerous. More than one poor little lamb had been blinded by the large, sharp thorns that edge the giant leaves. But the kraal had not been made for a sheepfold ; it has a pathetic history : it is God's acre. Beneath its surface, undisturbed by the bleating of the flocks, sleeps the dust of a few Christian Kaffirs. Years ago a mission church stood here, and this was their burying-ground. Twenty years ago there was a Kaffir war ; the church was levelled to the ground, the old house, at which I stayed, was burnt, and several mission houses destroyed. After the war was over the Kaffirs were removed beyond the Kei River, so the mission was taken there, too, and the little church never rebuilt. The owners of the farm returned from their flight to Queenstown when the war was over, built their house up again, and bought the mission land to add to their own, and so the quiet graveyard became a sheepfold.

At this hospitable farm I soon found that being twenty miles from a railroad did not necessarily mean being buried alive. I have seldom been at a more lively place. The old people with whom I stayed came to the country forty years ago, when the voyage took five months, and where East London now flourishes there was only the bare sand and one building for Government stores. They had occupied their present home thirty years. Everybody about knew them, everybody respected them ; they were always on the look-out to do others a good turn, and ever ready to show hospitality. Every one who passed that way seemed to time his journey so as

to arrive about dinner- or tea-time ; if the latter, he was soon persuaded that it was too late to proceed further, and stayed all night. About once a week the C.M.R. (Cape Mounted Rifles) ride around their district to see if the farmers have had any cases of sheep-stealing or other trouble with the natives. Sometimes only one would come with his Kaffir servant, sometimes two, occasionally three ; they invariably stayed there for dinner, and always brought us a lot of news. Besides these weekly visitors, the road inspector and the collector of the agricultural report each spent a night at the house, and we often had visitors from other farms.

The amount of information we received about the affairs of our neighbours was always a wonder to me. I never quite understood how we got it, though I believe much came through the Kaffir servants. Be that as it may, we knew who went from home, and where they went to ; who had company, and who it was ; if any cattle or sheep were ill, dead, or stolen ; in fact, whatever concerned our neighbour seemed also to concern us. We did not consider this as gossip. We were shut off from the big world and its doings, so made up for it by taking a more lively interest in the little world of our own. Nor was that interest merely selfish. As soon as we heard that the daughter of a neighbour, three miles away, was ill with a bad throat, the Cape cart was "inspanned," and off went three of us to see what was the matter and if we could be of any use. The mother had been so kind when they had sickness, they must do all they could for her now, they said.

Let no one go to the colonies without some idea

of treating simple complaints. The nearest doctor was some forty miles off, and, as visits are charged according to distance, they would cost five pounds each.

We arrived at a fair-sized, comfortable house, and were taken into the bedroom to see the patient, who was in bed, rather feverish, and with her throat so swollen that she could only swallow with great difficulty. She was the eldest of a large family ; but they had been very healthy generally, and the mother did not seem to have any idea what to do for the girl. She had neither gargled nor fomented her throat, nor done anything for it. The girl had just lain in bed, and each day her throat had got worse, till, when they got really alarmed about it, the father had gone to the doctor's that afternoon to get something from him for her. We sent her something to gargle with, and at night her father returned with two bottles from the doctor, one for a gargle, one for a medicine. The father was Dutch, but not the wife. She generally spoke Dutch, but could not read it. The doctor, supposing he was sending to Dutch people, wrote the directions on the bottles in that language. The result was, the girl took a dose of the gargle and gargled with the physic before the mistake was found out. It turned out to be quinsy, and was just at its worst when we went, but in a few days she was all right again.

Though we were fourteen miles from the actual post-office, the farm itself was a little branch one for the receiving and dispatch of letters. At half-past seven every Wednesday and Saturday morning, one of the Kaffir boys rode off with the postbag on his back, and returned about three with it, often well filled

with letters and papers for the surrounding farms. These were usually all taken to their respective owners within an hour or so of their arrival. It seemed to be an understood thing that those who came for their post took not only their own, but that of any neighbour whom they passed on their way.

The post town was also the place where the nearest church was. I say *town*, but I am doubtful what title I ought to apply to it. In England we should say a hamlet, but being on the main road it is considered a place of some trade and importance, and enjoys a fairly prominent position on most maps. It consists of a shop, hotel, the mission church, clergyman's house, post-office, school, lending library—at which the books from a distance were exchanged on service Sunday—and about a dozen houses. It is certainly not size that gives importance here.

The church belonged to a Kaffir mission, but English service was held monthly. I was taken to it once. When reading of people in the colonies going so many miles to church, I used to think how earnest they must be. I found I had been mistaken. It is just as possible for people to go fourteen miles to show off their clothes and see their neighbours as to go around the corner with the same motive. The going to church forms a little break in the often monotonous farm life.

I cannot say I altogether enjoyed the Sunday I went. We had to start soon after breakfast. As the horses needed a rest before returning, it was considered necessary that we should get there quite an hour before service, and stay about two hours

after it. I was entertained at the clergyman's house to dinner. A letter of introduction had been sent him from Cape Town on my account, and he had taken the trouble to ride over to see me while at the Dutch farm. Parishes are large here. I enjoyed the sermon, but not the service, which was gone through too rapidly. When we got back it was tea-time, and there was no time left for quiet thought and Bible-reading. It seemed as if most of the day had been wasted in going and coming.

I have found South Africa a very irreligious place, and have talked with many, who know it much more intimately than myself, who have endorsed my opinion. In the towns many of the young people, removed from the restraints imposed by the opinions of parents and friends, have learned to scoff and sneer at the religion which they once professed to believe. In the country carelessness and disregard of the Sabbath are prevalent. A village that gets a church or chapel service once a month is very well off. The ministers, being stationed in the towns, send curates or local preachers to the villages round about in turn. I have often thought what a splendid field this would be for the Church Army Gospel Vans!

The irrigation of the land is an important item of farm work, and was to me very interesting, involving much more labour and skill than I ever thought. This farm possessed a copious water supply in the form of a stream which even nine months of drought a few years ago failed to exhaust. So beside the large garden there was a considerable quantity of cultivated land, and the different parts

had to be irrigated in turn. A shallow ditch is dug, called a "furrow," into which the water is turned. Other furrows branch from the principal one, which can be opened or closed at any time by means of a shovelful of earth. Along one of these the water is "led" to the field which is to be watered. Across this field shallow furrows run at regular intervals. Beginning at the top of the field, a Kaffir, with a hoe or spade, leads the water into the first furrow, taking care that it flows on well to the end of it. When that is sufficiently soaked he closes it, turning the water into the next, and so on down the field. It sounds easy enough, but it needs judgment, care, and skill if the field is to be evenly watered and the water not wasted—and it is too precious to waste here.

Of course only that land can be irrigated which lies lower than the water supply, and the quantity of land cultivated depends largely on the amount of water at the farmer's disposal. Mealies is the only crop which it is safe to grow on land that cannot be irrigated.

The water supply in this country is a mystery to me, and seems to point to the existence of underground streams and reservoirs of whose magnitude we have no conception.

It was the season when the mealies were being gathered in. The plants are just left standing till thoroughly dry; then the Kaffirs go and husk the cobs and put them in bags which the ox-waggon brings up to the storeroom, where the corn is shelled and put into other bags.

I had often read of "mealies," and, though I knew

it meant Indian corn, I could never quite understand how it was used for food. It is boiled and eaten green when half-grown, as in America ; but a common food of the Kaffir and of many farmers is "stamped mealies." The ripe Indian corn, just such as we feed poultry with, is taken and "stamped," a process which furnishes a plentiful amount of healthy exercise—if you are not short-winded ! A section of a tree-trunk, about a yard high, has a hollow made in the top, like a deep basin, into which the corn is poured. The stampers are pieces of round wood about half a yard in length, bluntly pointed at the ends and thinner in the middle, by which part they are grasped firmly in one hand, lifted up as high as the arm can be raised, and dashed down with all the strength into the midst of the mealies. Often two Kaffir girls will stamp together, striking alternately ; sometimes going round and round the mealies as they do it, and striking in various fanciful ways. The grains of corn are somewhat broken by this process, but that does not matter ; the object of it is to get the tough outside skin off each grain. When stamped sufficiently, it is poured from one tin to another till most of the skins are blown away ; then it is taken and washed, and lastly boiled several hours, when it is delicious. This, with "calabash milk," forms the staple Kaffir food.

A calabash is a large gourd which seems to grow in all parts of Africa. It is almost globular in shape, but with a long, narrow neck. The seeds are cleaned out by shaking little stones about in it ; it is then ready for use. It is filled with new milk and stood in the sun or near the fire, that it may go sour

quickly. It takes a few days for a calabash to get into proper working order. It is never emptied, a little sour milk being always left in, and every morning it is filled up with new milk, which in a few hours, if the calabash be a good one, will be ready to drink. The milk has quite a different taste from milk that goes sour in the usual way. At first you do not like it, but soon get fond of it if you keep tasting. It is considered very healthy, and is most refreshing in hot weather. It has a tendency to make you sleepy. The farmers suppose it to have been the drink that Jael gave to Sisera.

Mealies are also used for making Kaffir beer. The grains are crushed fine between flat stones, being moistened during the process, and afterwards mixed with water and fermented.

Another grain much used for food is Kaffir corn, a small, roundish grain about the size of a grain of buckwheat. It only needs to be washed and well boiled ; eaten with sweet or calabash milk and sugar it is very good indeed.

A number of bags of mealies having been sold, they were sent to the station on the great ox waggon. These waggons are immense, capable of carrying from two to three tons, and are drawn by eighteen oxen. As the oxen travel slowly, they were started late in the afternoon and would travel most of the night, getting home again the next evening. For that short journey they would be allowed little time for food or rest. There are places along all roads where oxen or horses can be "uitspanned"—that is, loosened and allowed to eat. Fastening them to the waggon again is called "inspanning."

In the days before the railway—and now in places remote from it—these great waggons go regularly to carry supplies to the farms ; they are then called “transport” waggons. A governess whom I met in Cape Town told me of the farm where she was being a week without bread because the transport waggon was late. Every morning they used to climb the hill, from which they could see the distant road, to look if it were coming.

“Treking,” which merely means journeying, is very comfortably accomplished by means of these waggons. A removable semi-circular cover fits on the back part of the waggon, occupying about a quarter of it. When this cover is on, the load is piled up in front of it, while in the covered part can be put the bedding, the members of the family, and a few cooking-utensils. At night, the bedding being spread out, the covered portion makes a comfortable bedroom for the women and children ; the men sleeping under the waggon, hanging blankets or sacks around it to make it like a little hut. A fire will be made of wood ; the Kaffir pot, a large iron pot with three legs, so that it can be stood right on the fire, will do all the boiling. Meat can be broiled on the red coals, and if they want to bake they need not look far for an oven. All about are anthills, rising in smooth domes, as hard as if made of cement. They vary in size, averaging, perhaps, a yard in diameter and half a yard in height. Selecting one that has been deserted by the ants, a hole is made in the side and the middle scraped out ; a fire is then made in it, and they have one of the best of “brick” ovens. Driving the flocks

slowly along, and bringing their families and few goods in the great ox waggons, the Dutch Boers thus treked for miles across an unknown country in bygone days. When the weather is good and pasture and water plentiful, life in these moving houses must be rather pleasant.

Going with a transport waggon is a life which some young farmers enjoy very much, but it has its dark side as well as its bright one. I have heard them tell about going up to Johannesburg, a distance of about five hundred miles from their home, taking a load of farm produce to sell, starting with oxen strong and fat ; but it has been dry weather, the grass has got burnt up, the "uitspans" have been eaten bare, and when they have got home in a month or six weeks, the oxen have been so thin and weak that they could hardly pull the empty waggon. After a month's rest and fattening, they have been taken off for another journey.

The farm where I was staying was a small one, only fifteen hundred acres. A good-sized farm in this part is about six thousand acres ; on the Karroo, where much of the land is often barren, they are larger. Fencing is therefore an expensive item, and farms are not divided into fields as with us. They are fenced around the boundary, and the cultivated land will all be enclosed by one fence just to keep the cattle out. Sometimes three or four large pieces will be divided off for the convenience of keeping cattle or ostriches separate ; these are not called fields, a term you never hear in this part, but "camps." Economy, not beauty, is studied in the matter of fencing ; the commonest is made of

strong wire, about five rows being tightly stretched between posts, which are placed in the ground at regular intervals; often the top wire is barbed. This fence is not at all picturesque, but I suppose it is the best for utility. Wood is not plentiful enough in most places to be used for fencing; and though there is no end of suitable stones, sheep and goats are rather clever in climbing stone walls, and, beside that, few Kaffirs, I am told, are good hands at making them. There are no pretty creepers festooned everywhere, as one sees on the rail fences of America; they stand bare and unadorned in all their rude ugliness, so it is well for the beauty of the landscape that they are few.

As the springtime draws on, the old, dried-up grass is wanted out of the way, so that the cattle may be able to get at the new as it shoots up. It would be impossible to mow either veld or kopje on account of the stones, to say nothing of the amount of labour necessary; so the grass is burnt off. In the day the grass fires show but little; at night they are very beautiful, especially those on the hillsides, which extend in all sorts of fantastic zigzag lines of fire, changing from hour to hour. Much care has to be exercised in firing the grass, as the wind often rises very suddenly, when the fire may tear along beyond the boundary of the farm where it was started, and the farmer is responsible for any damage it may do to his neighbour. The greatest danger is lest it gets where the sheep are. If it should, they will not make the slightest effort to run away, but will all huddle together, and the whole flock be burned to death.

CHAPTER IX.

DOMESTIC ITEMS.

Arrangement of Rooms—Servants—Duties—Washing—Mangle—
Ironing—Mud Floors—Carpet—Churning—Water—Funerals.

AS the houses are all of one storey, there are, of course, no stairs, and many houses have no lobbies, or one running through only part of the house. You frequently enter directly into the dining-room, and the bedrooms commonly open into it or into the parlour. Kitchens are always entirely or partially separated from the rest of the house, and are generally rather small; so much of the work is done out of doors—and no room is taken up with chairs, as the Kaffirs always squat down on the floor. There are no open grates, a stove or range being generally used for cooking; occasionally a fire out of doors will be utilised. Wood and mealie cobs are burned; coal is considered bad-smelling, unhealthy stuff by the country folks.

All the servants on a farm are natives. They live in their own little huts on different parts of the farm, and are paid so much money and so much mealies and milk daily for their food; some being provided with food wholly or partly in the kitchen.

The men are hired for different work—some to be generally useful, some only as “herds,” to look after sheep and cattle, for, as there are so few fences and various wild enemies, they want a good deal of looking after. One woman is generally hired as household servant, and several more for specified duties—such as washing, ironing, scrubbing floors weekly, cleaning the pans, and fetching the daily supply of water. As this latter is usually some distance from the house, a huge pail or a barrel is kept filled in the kitchen for cooking and drinking purposes. Often there is a furrow close by, from which water can be dipped for commoner uses.

The kitchen is open to all your Kaffirs and their friends. The household servant comes first thing in the morning, and goes home to her hut when she has finished washing up at night. She is probably married and has a baby, and two or three more children, who also take up their abode in your kitchen—at least, when there is anything eatable to be had ; at other times they live out of doors. Then the Kaffir “boys” come into the kitchen to light their pipes and get their food. All Kaffirs are called “boys” here, however old they may be. They are very sociable. Your girl will not spend much time in the kitchen alone, and if she is sitting on the ground in the sun, peeling potatoes, there will be two or three women sitting about talking to her. Both men and women are inveterate talkers ; this sometimes interferes with the amount of work done, but as a Kaffir will never hurry, it is seldom that anything is gained by checking their volubility.

The woman who cleans the pots and pans will generally take them to a furrow or stream, and sitting down will scour them with some of the earth, or a soft stone that she picks up beside her, till they look like new.

If there is a river or spring near, the clothes are taken there to be washed ; if not, the water is brought and put into tubs—always out of doors. In either case the clothes are washed in cold water. The tubs stand on the ground ; the Kaffir girl sits down beside them, lifts the things out of the water one at a time, and, laying each on a flat, sloping stone, proceeds to soap and rub it well, pouring occasionally a little water over it. Sometimes another stone or an unopened pine cone is used to rub those which are very dirty. They will not put them back in the water till fairly clean ; they say it dirties the water for the other clothes if they rub the dirt out in the water. After being washed, rinsed, and blued—never boiled—they are laid on the grass, or hung on bushes or a line to dry. The powerful sunlight acts as a bleacher, and things are beautifully white. In Cape Town I have seen clothes hung around the edges of the flat roofs, held in place by stones, and spread over bare earth with stones laid on their corners. Things generally dry anywhere and anyhow. I have washed a thick woollen dress and cloak after school was over at four o'clock, and had them dry by six. Flannels are washed just like cotton goods. They say you cannot shrink flannel with cold water ; knitted articles certainly seem to wash better by this process.

Twice I noticed a large, clumsy mat at the door

some five or six inches thick. It was like a big horse-blanket folded up into a large square. I thought, "What funny ideas the people here have! I suppose they have been giving the house an extra cleaning and want us to wipe our feet well; we cannot help seeing a great, clumsy mat like that, at any rate." I said nothing, but wiped my feet on it carefully as I walked over it. Some time after I discovered that my big, clumsy mat was the South African mangle! The clothes are damped, folded straight, and piled up carefully into a large square on a blanket which is folded over them. They are then put on the floor and "tramped" on. The object of putting them in the doorway is that every one may do his share of the tramping as he walks in or out—not that it may serve the purpose of a mat. When the clothes are supposed to have been tramped sufficiently, they are hung out in the sun to air. Only starched clothes are ironed. Irons are usually heated on the stove, but I have seen a flat piece of iron, supported at the corners by stones, with a little fire under it, out of doors, answer the purpose.

I must tell you some more about the earth or "mud" floors, as they are called. The Kaffir women make them; they floor their own huts in the same way. I am told that it is a great deal of trouble to make them nicely and free from cracks. A few inches of soil being dug out, a number of anthills are collected, pounded fine with stones, and the dust put in for the floor; this is moistened with water and pressed down solid. It requires several days of alternate damping and drying, smoothing and pressing, to make a firm, level floor. When finished,

it must be newly carpeted every week, or it will crack and get dusty. You could never guess what a South African carpet is! Having swept her hut, or your kitchen, the Kaffir girl goes out with a pail or tin, and fills it with the dried cow-dung which is lying plentifully about. This she lays in a heap on the floor, pours water over it, and mixes it up with her hands till it is like thick batter. Then she spreads or "smears" it over the floor by a peculiar scraping of the mass along with the side of the hand. It needs practice to smear a floor nicely; it must be even, and neither too thickly nor too thinly spread. Sometimes they make it in patterns. When dry it looks very nice, and gives the room a clean, "cowy" smell. The South African carpet is by no means to be despised. It is considered very beneficial for weak chests, which is more than can be said of some of our dusty ones.

The well-to-do farmers now have the best rooms of their houses floored with wood, as they are warmer; but wood is dear, and mud floors are much more plentiful than board ones. Some are oiled with linseed oil instead of being smeared, but the smearing seems to me both cleaner and warmer.

My evenings at this farm were very comfortable; there was a tiny stove in the corner of the sitting-room, in which a good fire of mealie cobs blazed every evening, so the room was warm and cheerful.

Here I learned a way of churning which was to me quite novel. They had a nice barrel churn, but sometimes there was not much cream ready, not nearly enough for the churn, and we wanted just a little butter. In that case the cream was put in

a basin or in a small tin pail, and we beat it with a spoon—something like beating batter. I once got butter in fifteen minutes, and felt quite proud of it, as it was the first churning I had done by myself. The cream was not always so obliging, though; I think it was often too cold. Sometimes after my hostess and I had tried it an hour we handed it over to the Kaffir girl. She would have it in a little tin pail, put a clean cloth under the lid to make it fit quite tightly, then putting one hand on the lid and one under the pail, would shake it up and down regularly, and generally soon got butter. That is the Kaffir way of churning, only they put the milk in skins instead of cans, I believe.

In this dry atmosphere water keeps sweet and good for a very long time. Though this farm had such a good water supply, rain-water was preferred for drinking, and was stored in a large galvanised iron tank, where it kept sweet and pure for months.

The twin baby that was ill, after lingering on for some days, died. Funerals seem very sad in these out-of-the-way places. There are cemeteries by the towns, but they are too far away; so a grave is generally dug in some quiet corner of the farm and a little plot fenced around for a family burying-place. As bodies cannot usually be kept long, and the ministers are miles away, it often happens that they cannot come to the funeral. Then some Christian neighbour will conduct what short service there is; all the farmers about attending with some part of their families, to show their sympathy with the bereaved ones. Sometimes a little headstone is put

over the grave, but not always. Those left behind remember who sleeps there, and few strangers pass to and fro to notice inscription or epitaph; so the dust sleeps in quiet, unnoticed loneliness until the day when death shall be swallowed up in victory.

CHAPTER X.

ANIMAL LIFE.

Sheep—Shepherds—Lambs—Goats—Carelessness—Milking—
Oxen—Yoking—Driving—Rinderpest—Horses—Training—
Chief's Horse—Knee-Haltering.

BEFORE breakfast I used often to watch the flock of sheep start off in the morning. The "boy" who took care of them wore only his red blanket, which he wrapped gracefully around him, usually leaving the left shoulder bare. I have been told that should there be a shower in the course of the day, he would roll his blanket up and carry it under his arm till the shower was over. He would then have a dry blanket to put on; and it does not hurt bare skin to get wet! At night the sheep are driven back, and shut up in the kraal near the house, to keep the lambs safe from the jackals. July is the month for the early lambs, and there were about three hundred on this farm. On the way back almost every sheep seems to lose her lamb, and when they arrive at the kraal there is a full chorus of plaintive cries from voices young and old; while the little lambs are running about excitedly, smelling first at one sheep, then at another, all the while calling loudly for their lost mothers.

How they can distinguish each other's voice in that Babel of "bahs" is wonderful; but they do. The cries become fewer and fewer, till only two or three continue, and soon these too are happily re-united, and the whole flock settles down quietly for the night.

You can realise, when rain is scanty and the pasture nearly dried up, how sheep need leading to the green spots that remain by the still waters and in sheltered nooks. You see the difference, too, between the hireling (and here, alas! often the owner), who cares nothing for the sheep, and a good shepherd, who would carry the little tired lambs in his bosom, and lead the flock gently, instead of hurrying and frightening them along. I have often seen the Kaffirs driving the flock on quickly, some poor little tired lambs lagging behind, hardly able to go any farther; but the drivers never care, they keep frightening them on with whips or sometimes with drumming on an old tin pan behind them. There is nothing of the loving care that one associates with the name of shepherd seen here. Sheep are only looked upon as a source of income. The more money that can be made out of them with the least trouble the better. They have no shed to shelter in if it rains; and rain comes down in torrents, that quickly wets everything to the skin. Some poor little lambs usually die in each storm. However poor the pasture is, the sheep are not fed. If they cannot pick up a living, they have to starve. Irrigated land is not plentiful enough, it is said, to grow roots for a lot of sheep. Many a sheep forsakes her new-born lamb in a dry season, because she has no

milk for it. The pasture was fairly good, or perhaps I had better say not very bad, at the time I was on the farm. Only a few sheep refused to take their little ones, and these were induced to do so by being tied up and plentifully fed on green barley for a couple of days.

There are two lambing-seasons—July and September ; which lot of lambs does the better depends very much on the rain. If there are nice spring showers, the early ones are the best ; but if there is no spring rain, the pasture keeps getting worse instead of better. The mothers then have insufficient milk, and the poor little hungry things, being able to get nothing else, fill their stomachs with the hard dried-up grass, which they cannot digest, and thus many die. Almost all the early lambs had died the previous year. We had several nice showers, and things seemed very promising when I left the farm ; but later, hot, drying winds came instead of rain, and fears were entertained that many lambs would again be lost.

I only saw one small flock of Angora goats ; these were very beautiful. They are kept largely on the Karroo, and I could ascertain no reason why they are not kept where I was, except that they are more trouble than sheep. They are certainly much better adapted to endure the uncertainties of the climate, being able to keep fat and happy where a poor sheep drags out a miserable existence.

Never have I been in any place where animals are so uncared for. The cattle have no houses or sheds ; no hay is made anywhere, so when the

pasture is poor, they are half-starved. I was told that several years ago a severe snowstorm occurred, the snow covering all the grass; so the poor animals had to stand about shivering for several days with no food till the snow melted.

The cows and calves would be a source of astonishment to any English farmer. Oxen being used in great numbers, all the calves are reared; and size is more of a consideration than milk-giving qualities in a cow. In some parts European breeds have been crossed in, but most of the cows are a more or less pure Kaffir variety; immense animals, some quite as big as the oxen, and possessed of wills and tempers of their own. A Kaffir cow considers that her milk was meant for her calf; if the calf does not have some she takes good care no one else shall have any. In cases where a calf dies, it is skinned, and the skin is tied around some orphan calf; and as the cow owns her young largely by the sense of smell she is induced by this means to adopt it. The milking process is rather amusing. The calves, which at other times are away from the cows, are turned into the kraal where the cows have been driven, one at a time. The calf runs eagerly to its mother for a drink. While it is sucking, a Kaffir cautiously passes a leather thong around the cow's hind legs, and ties them tightly together just above the hough; this prevents kicking or running away. Then he drives the calf off, squats down on the ground, and begins to milk, the calf meanwhile expressing its dissatisfaction by every means in its power—trotting about, knocking its little head against its mother's sides, rubbing its mouth against hers,

sometimes seizing hold of a teat whether or not, when it gets a sharp rap with a stick, and runs off again to its mother's head. At last the Kaffir has taken what he wants, so he unties the cow's legs and the little calf eagerly enjoys the milk that is left for it. Some cows have to be noosed around the horns and tied by the head, too.

When the calves are big, and can find enough pasture, their indignant antics are very amusing; but there is a great deal of real cruelty practised towards the poor little calves. If the milk is wanted, they are only allowed just enough to keep them alive, and no one thinks of feeding them with any substitute. The excuse is, "Oh, calves must not have much food here; they die if they over-eat." I daresay they do when they have been half-famished for days previously, but I know American calves keep healthy and happy on full stomachs; and I believe these would if they got the chance. The farmer never weans the calves—the cows see about that; while they have milk they let the calves suck, however big they are. When a cow begins to drive her calf away they give up trying to milk her.

The oxen are large and have very little training. It is quite a job sometimes to get them yoked. When they have been got to the desired place, several refractory ones will often dash away at full gallop, when two or three Kaffirs have to start in pursuit and drive them back. A large Cape waggon is drawn generally by sixteen oxen. Having driven the oxen together, the Kaffirs cautiously slip a leather noose around each one's horns. They are

then pulled into a straight line in the order in which they are to be yoked together, and yoked two and two. The yokes are ugly and uncomfortable. A round piece of wood, just like a part of an old-fashioned bedpost, is laid across the neck. Four short, flat pieces of wood slip through holes in this, and a leathern thong fastens from one piece to the next under the neck of each animal. These sidepieces shake about in an uncomfortable-looking manner; but the round poles press right against the backbone of the animal's neck when it tries to pull, and though a fat ox may manage to be fairly comfortable, a thin one cannot pull hard without hurting itself. If you watch them pulling, they never walk evenly together, but always one a little ahead of the other, so as to get the yoke sideways, and thus ease their necks a little. American oxen never pull like that; their yokes are nicely shaped to fit comfortably, and I believe they can pull nearly twice the weight in them. The heads of each yoke of oxen are tied together with the leathern thong by which they were caught, excepting the leaders'. The thongs around the leaders' horns are held by a Kaffir boy who runs on before to keep them in the right road. If they are vicious, he has to be wary, to keep out of the reach of their long horns. A driver walks beside with a bamboo whip about ten feet long, to which is attached a much longer leather lash, which he skilfully applies to any lazy ox in the team. Young oxen are often very cruelly treated when first yoked; if they prove obstinate, I have been told of their being whipped to death.

I have not felt so sorry for the ravages of the

rinderpest since I have seen the way cattle are treated here. It seems rather a blessing to them to be taken out of the world, and men who are too lazy and too selfish to care properly for the comfort of animals which serve them faithfully deserve to be without them. It is an acknowledged fact that animals are uncared for ; but no one seems ashamed of it. Instead of raising the heathen, the white man seems in many respects to have adopted their cruel, thoughtless ways.

The climate is very trying to horses, so they have to be looked after if they are to be kept in health. They are stabled during the cold nights, and fed with green, half-grown barley in addition to what they pick up for themselves. It is said that horses born in warmer climates are freer from vice than those of cold countries. It is well for those who have to use them that it is so. Until about three years old they run about half wild, never being haltered or bridled. When considered old enough for use the colt is driven into a kraal, bridled, and saddled. An older horse is ready, on which the trainer mounts. Keeping hold of the young one's bridle, he gallops it along by the side of the other until it begins to get rather tired ; then he mounts it and generally succeeds in riding it back home without very much trouble. They often try "bucking," as it is called. I have not seen them do it, but from the description it seems to be a sudden movement of the back which sends the rider flying up in the air if he is off his guard. After trying it in vain for a few times they generally give it up. An old horse that "bucks" occasionally is very dangerous to ride.

The Dutch farmers are generally very skilful in this kind of horse-breaking. Many horses are all right for riding, but cannot be harnessed to a trap; they would kick it all to pieces. Some of those that are driven go in a fashion that would not be at all calming to the nerves of timid people in England, but they are considered all right here.

Lest you should think too badly of them I will tell you the story of a Kaffir chief's horse, which shows that the animals are both affectionate and intelligent. The old farmer who told me had often watched it, years ago, when the chief's kraal was close by his farm. When the chief went where the white man's brandy was obtainable, he usually came home in such a state that he could with difficulty balance himself in the saddle. The horse seemed quite aware of its master's condition, and would come very carefully along; if it felt that he was leaning too far on either side it would lean its own body in the opposite direction so as to keep him balanced. In this way it usually succeeded in bringing him safely home.

The method adopted to prevent horses from straying far is called knee-haltering. When a horse is harnessed he always has the halter left on under the bridle. When stopping anywhere his master takes off the saddle and bridle, laying them on the ground, and ties the rope of the halter securely around the horse's fore-leg just below the knee, leaving it just long enough for the horse to reach the grass comfortably. It can walk slowly with its head down to eat, but cannot raise its head high or run. Some horses are clever enough to adapt themselves to

the situation. I have seen them stand on three feet and lift the tied one up in the air, so that they can raise their heads and have a look around; and though they cannot trot, some learn to move head and foot in unison, so as to get over the ground very quickly.

CHAPTER XI.

OSTRICHES AND POULTRY.

Appearance — Hatching — Feathers—Pulling Stumps—Hens—
Chickens—Hawks—Turkeys—Hatching Extraordinary.

I OBTAINED my first glimpse of the ostriches from the train coming over the Karroo ; and when I arrived at Mrs. Van Droon's was delighted to find that they had two pairs of grown birds, and five one-year-old ones. It is not just the ostrich country where I was, the birds doing better among the bushes than on grass, I believe ; but some of the farmers keep just a few, as they are very profitable if properly managed, and require but little food. Each pair must have a large camp to themselves, and will there find most of their own living ; should they seem to require it, a few mealies are given.

Though it was not the breeding-season, which is in the summer, the male birds were cross, so I did not get to see them close at hand, but went quite near to one of the hens. The male is jet black and white ; the hen, and all young birds until full grown, are brown and white. The legs are thick and long, covered with a tough skin, which has the peculiar leathery look of the elephant's hide, and is evidently meant to be unaffected by the burning heat of the

desert sands or the prickly bushes among which it wanders. Its body is raised high out of the reach of either, its neck being sufficiently long to reach the ground easily; that also is bare, but slender and graceful. The bird's gait is peculiar, yet pleasing. Its body seems exactly balanced on the top of its long legs as on a pivot, and there is a continual slight oscillation of the body, even when it is standing, but more noticeable as it walks. It reminds one of a boat rocking on a calm sea. The rate at which these birds get over the ground when only walking slowly is astonishing.

The hen ostrich furnishes no arguments in favour of evolution in an intellectual direction. Her character is exactly the same to-day as when Job described it three thousand years ago—"She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers. . . . God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath He imparted to her understanding." Her face is very expressive of these characteristics. There is no motherly expression in it, but a strange look of childish wonder and curiosity. The vacant expression of a newly hatched turkey gives the nearest approach to it with which we are familiar; but on so large a bird, one that we look *up* to, the effect is most peculiar. The beak is large, and they will swallow very bulky substances. I was amused to see a large lump of something it had just swallowed slowly passing down the long, bare neck of one of the young ostriches as I stood watching them. The hen is allowed to hatch her own eggs, her mate helping her by sitting during the night and fighting any one who approaches the spot during the day. As soon as the young ones

come out they are taken away, as the old ones would take no care of them, and most of them would probably die. As it was not the breeding-season I did not see a baby ostrich.

The birds must look magnificent when in full feather ; all I saw had been denuded of the beautiful feathers which grow about the wings and tail. These are cut off close to the skin as soon as fully grown, before the bird dirties or frays them. When the moulting season comes round, though the stumps of the feathers get loose, they will not drop out as they would naturally do with the weight of the feather attached, and if they remain they interfere with the growth of the new feathers, so they have to be pulled out. I watched the stumps being pulled from the young ostriches, and a most ludicrous performance it was. The birds were driven into an enclosed yard. Then one man took a pillow-slip, and after a good deal of dodging and driving them about, he succeeded in slipping it over an ostrich's head. The ostrich has not sense to put its head down, but keeps stretching it up, shaking and nodding it about ; the pillow-case, which is left quite loose, flapping about in the most ridiculous manner. While thus blindfolded, one man seizes it firmly around the shoulders, while another proceeds to pull out the quills, using his teeth to draw those that he cannot grasp easily with his fingers. These quills do not bleed at all, but care has to be exercised not to bruise those of the new feathers, as they will bleed badly, and the new feathers will thus be injured. As the birds were young, only one, probably a young male, attempted to fight. Up came his powerful two-toed foot with

a strong forward kick like lightning, showing how deadly must be the attack of a furious full-grown bird. Ostriches do not fight at all with the beak, but are very dangerous kickers.

Poultry, as on farms in England, are left largely to follow their own inclinations. There are no fowl-houses, or if there is a little one, it is whitewashed once in two or three years, and as insects are always plentiful in warm places, the hens prefer roosting in the trees, where they are safe, if near the house. If there are no trees they go on whatever they can find that answers the purpose—sometimes the top of the Cape cart. Hens usually secrete their nests among the long grass, stones, and bushes, many eggs being undoubtedly lost ; yet they come clucking up at all seasons with fine broods of strong, healthy chickens, when they have succeeded in hiding themselves safely from all enemies, but they are not always so fortunate. Three that we knew were sitting went on nicely till just the day before hatching, when some animal, supposed to be one of the Kaffir dogs, found the nests and destroyed all the eggs. Little chickens grow astonishingly. For the first two days they are fed on softened bread ; afterwards they seldom have anything but mealies which have been cracked with stones. As they have their liberty they pick up plenty of insects. They have many enemies, hawks being the worst. If they run where bushes and thorn-trees abound, they are fairly safe if with a good hen ; but if the veld is bare, they fare badly. Hawks cannot swoop down well among trees. It is wonderful what sharp eyes a good hen has. I was feeding a brood near noon one day. I noticed the hen stop

eating and keep looking about warily, but she made no noise to the chickens. I looked, but could see nothing. At last, by shading my eyes from the sun, I saw, far off, a hawk, just a little speck in the sky. It was not coming towards us, and as soon as it had gone the hen went on quietly eating again. Had it been coming she would have called the chickens under cover quickly.

Turkeys do well, but there are many losses with them. They will make their nests so far from the house that, before they are found, a wild cat not only has the eggs but kills the turkey as well.

I must give you a little episode in chicken-hatching that happened at Mrs. Van Droon's. One day a hen came clucking along with nine chickens. The next morning the youngest girl was wrapping something in flannel and putting it in the sun. On inquiry I found that she had three eggs which had been left in the nest the day before; probably the hen had been back on them through the night, but they would have been bare all the previous day. One was nearly hatched, the other two were just chipped, and the girl was putting them in the sun to finish hatching! Later in the day, when the sun was less powerful, they were put in a warm corner of the kitchen hearth. One died, but the two chipped eggs produced fine strong chickens, which were put with the rest of the family.

CHAPTER XII.

KAFFIR CUSTOMS.

Town Natives—Locations—Raw Kaffirs—Huts—Thatch—Dress—Appearance—Ornaments—Tattooing—Smoking—Carrying—Strength—Babies—Health—Wealth—Work—Sense of Justice—Chief—School-Children—Presents—Stealing—Stolen Horses—Tracing the “Spoor”—Old Law—Clay—A Cut Finger.

THERE were plenty of natives at Cape Town, but these had been in contact with civilised life for some time and differed widely from the “raw” or “red” Kaffir of the country. The town native is not attractive. Up the country each town has its “location,”—an adjoining town really, separated from it by a little space—where the natives live. I have not been in one, but seen from a distance the assemblage of little mud-coloured houses does not look inviting. Here the natives live much as do poor white people, dress in European clothes, and copy European sins and follies. Some are dressed in the height of the fashion, others are dirty and untidy.

I have not been into Kaffirland, but the farm where I stayed was only a few miles from the Kei River, its western boundary, and most of the farm servants were raw Kaffirs, who had been as yet

but little in contact with civilised life. They lived in their own healthy, natural way in their pretty round huts, which seemed to me just like "Little Arthur's History" out of the book, for they must be like those the old Britons used to make.

Trunks of trees or thick branches are driven into the ground in a circle interlaced with twigs and plastered over with mud. This much the men do, but the flooring and thatching is the women's work. I have seen them put a new thatch on a hut, and very skilfully they do it, using long coarse grass. They begin at the top, tying the grass firmly to the framework of the roof with strong rope made of platted grass. The top of each handful is slipped securely and neatly under the edge of the row above as they work down the slope of the roof, the last row projecting beyond the edge of the hut walls. The door is like a stiff basket-work mat, made of the bamboo-like reeds that grow in some parts by the rivers. A neatly kept Kaffir hut is very pretty and seems very comfortable. There is a large flat stone in the middle of the hut, on which a fire of wood or dried cow-dung is made if the weather is cold or wet. When the door is shut at night the smoke filters out through the thatched roof. Kaffirs are not, as a rule, dirty; some keep their huts very nice. The fire is usually out of doors near the hut; the big Kaffir pot, in which the mealies are boiled, standing over it.

Before Europeans came, the Kaffirs made their cooking pots of clay, and their clothing was skins sewn together; nearly all now have substituted blankets. They get the name "red" Kaffir from

their custom of colouring all their blankets with red ochre. The blanket is spread on the ground and the dry powdered ochre is scattered over it. It is then beaten with sticks until it is thoroughly and evenly coloured; when dirty it is cleaned by being beaten again with more ochre.

The women wear a skirt reaching to the ankle made of the same red blanket stuff, and have also a blanket thrown over the shoulders; but they often go about bare to the waist. A very few wear a little bib hung around the neck which just covers the breast. They are well-proportioned, beautifully shaped, as straight as arrows, and some of them very nice-looking. The hair is woolly, and generally cut close to the head. Their teeth are like snow and perfectly even. They take great care of them, always rinsing the mouth out with water after eating. When they want to look very nice the women daub their faces all over with a kind of clay, which, according to our ideas, makes them look hideous; they appear just as if they were wearing a mask. They go barefooted.

They are fond of brass rings on their arms, which, when bright, look very pretty on their brown skins. I can understand now why eastern women are so fond of jewels; a dark skin shows up their beauty as a white one never can. One kind of bracelet is put on in childhood; it consists of fine rings, reaching from the wrist nearly to the elbow, each increasing slightly in size. When the child has grown up these rings cannot be taken off, and if the arm of the wearer should become rather larger than the average, the smaller rings at the wrist

become too tight, causing the arm to swell and pain badly, sometimes rendering it almost useless. Occasionally they will have the tightest rings filed and opened slightly, so as to loosen them ; but nothing will prevail on them to have the rings removed. I could not discover why. The farmers say it is only pride, but I think there must be some superstition connected with them. Only a few women have these tight bracelets, most wearing thick loose ones.

There are belles among the Kaffir damsels as well as in civilised society. A species of tattooing is resorted to as a means of increasing their beauty—not on the face, but on the arms, neck, and body. I must confess that I rather admired it. I am told that it is done by pricking the skin with a hot needle ; the colour is not changed by the process, but a sort of pattern of little elevations and indentations is made, as if there were a string of beads under the skin.

Some can make pretty bead ornaments and trimmings. Children often have a string of beads around neck and waist.

Both men and women smoke, often carrying their tobacco in a little bag made of the skin of some small animal which has been stripped off whole. This is hung from the waist.

The women wear a kerchief twisted around the head in a sort of turban style, so as to form a flat cushion on which to carry weights. A Kaffir seldom carries anything in the hands ; everything goes on the head—the tiny parcel, the large bundle of wood, the pail of water or milk, the Kaffir pot, the basket of clean clothes ; it matters not what it is, up it goes.

They rarely touch it, and can balance things steadily, even in a strong wind. They are trained to do it from infancy. I used to be amused watching the little mites that could not much more than walk trying to do it.

The strength of the Kaffir women is astonishing. They will carry an immense pail of water, holding as much as four good-sized English pails, on their head, and with a fat baby on their back will come at a good pace uphill, never stopping to rest or seeming out of breath. Coming in at the door they will stoop, that the pail may clear the top of the doorway, and when inside will lift the weight off their heads themselves.

A Kaffir baby is the happiest little mortal I ever saw. It never wears a thread of clothing, being kept snug and warm on its mother's bare back. She takes half a blanket, or a piece of sacking, ties it tightly round her waist by two corners, then bends down, putting the baby flat on its face on her back with its little feet stretched out towards her hips. The blanket is next folded up over it, so as to catch it round the neck, and is drawn tight under the mother's arms and tied across her chest. A big baby has the blanket drawn across its shoulders so that its arms are free. There it has everything that a baby can wish for—warmth, motion, and its mother's society. These babies seldom cry, amusing themselves by patting their mother's bare shoulders and watching what goes on about them. When sleepy they just shut their little eyes and nod off. If the little one is hungry, the mother unfastens the top of the blanket, pulls the baby around so

that it is sitting astride of her hip, keeps one arm around it so that it may not fall, and goes on with her work. It has to learn to hold fast to its dinner till it has had enough, like a young calf. When satisfied, it is slipped round on its mother's back again. Sometimes they are put down in the sun and let roll about in the dust while their mothers are busy beside them.

I am told that few die in infancy. They are very hardy, little ones running about outside the huts on bitterly cold, frosty mornings without any clothing. They always seem merry and good-tempered, playing quite happily together in the warm sun. They have a little blanket when big enough to hold it, but oftener go without. The infantile mind evidently regards clothing as a thing not for use, but for ornament. I was amused one day to see a four-year-old strutting about proudly, his solitary garment being one little old shoe which he had found somewhere.

A Kaffir's wealth is his flocks and cattle. He pays for his wife in cows—seven, I believe, being about the price. If he can afford it, he has two wives. In Kaffirland the man leads an easy life of animal enjoyment. His wife fetches water and wood, prepares and cooks the food, hoes the mealies—in fact, does all the hard work. Her husband sits in the sun, talking, smoking, and drinking Kaffir beer; his only care being the flocks and cattle, and the young men and boys do most of the work in looking after them. After generations of this sort of life it is not surprising that the men are rather lazy. They will work fairly well when the master is about, but



RAFFIR WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN

he must not go away and expect that much will be done in his absence.

As a people they have a keen sense of justice ; that plain, straightforward dealing which children appreciate. The intricacies of civilised law are, to them, quite incomprehensible, and for that reason white methods of government are not respected as they used to be. They have been accustomed to the rule of a chief, and the chief was an absolute monarch of his own tribe.

The following incident which was narrated to me by an old farmer will illustrate this : A farm was for sale for five thousand pounds. A Kaffir chief said that he would buy it, paid some money down on it, and drove some of his cattle in. He thought that he could easily collect enough money from his tribe ; but it seems the Kaffirs have very little idea of how much it takes to make a large quantity of anything, and he found to his disappointment that he could not get more than half the money. He sent at once and took out his cattle, then went and told the farmer that he was not able to buy the farm, and asked to have the money he had paid down returned. The farmer said he had taken possession of the farm and must keep it. The chief replied that he could not keep it when he could not get the money ; he had taken his stock off at once, and they had done the place no harm. The farmer would not yield. The chief then inquired of his white friends if the English Government would not make the farmer give back the money, and was told "No" ; they could not interfere if he did not choose to do so. The chief was very angry and said indignantly, "Then

the Government is no government at all if it cannot make people do as it says!"

The farmer appealed to a magistrate, and the chief was summoned to attend the court held at a neighbouring town. Not understanding legal proceedings, and mistrusting the English designs towards himself, he refused to go, and the farmers say that this trivial incident was the real cause of the last Kaffir war.

A lady who had taught a mission school mentioned to me the strong sense of justice which the Kaffir children possessed. Usually they were most tractable and easily ruled, but if one were shown some favour which was not extended to the others, no more good could be done with them, unless she carefully explained to all first why the favour was granted; then they were quite satisfied.

Though appreciating justice, a Kaffir seems to have no idea of gratitude. If you give him anything you must give it as payment for something done, never as a present or thank-offering.

I was told of a farmer who had a particularly good Kaffir shepherd. He had served him faithfully for fifteen years, appearing perfectly satisfied with his work and wages. Really good shepherds are not plentiful, and the master thought he would like to show his servant that he appreciated him. That lambing season had been a particularly good one, so he told the shepherd that as he had looked so well after the sheep, he might pick out twenty lambs for his own. Away went the Kaffir to his fellows. "What does my master mean? I have not looked after the sheep any better this year than I have

always done. If I deserve twenty lambs this year, I ought to have had them every year. My master has cheated me; he has not been paying me what my work was worth all these years!"

After that he was no good whatever, and his master was reluctantly obliged to dismiss him.

In some cases a present seems to awaken a sort of feeling that if you have no more sense than to give them something for nothing, they will get all they can out of you.

A farmer gave one of his "boys" a suit of his old clothes. Without any expression of gratitude, the man looked coolly at him and said, "Now, master, you must give me a pair of boots."

Kaffirs, like most heathen, are deceitful and dishonest. It is considered no disgrace to steal, if they are only clever enough to avoid getting caught at it. Yet the raw Kaffirs are much less troublesome in this way than many civilised neighbours. You can leave anything lying about. You can sleep with windows and doors open. Things are quite safe. They will touch nothing but food and stock; these you must keep your eyes on.

Should any cattle be stolen probably every Kaffir on the farm knows where they are, but they will never tell of each other to the white man.

A farmer told me of having two horses stolen from his stable one dark night many years ago. Every effort was made to trace them, but all in vain. Some of the educated Kaffirs are employed as policemen; being up to the native tricks they make very good ones, if they choose. About two years after the horses were stolen, one of these native

police rode up to the farm to arrest a Kaffir "boy" for sheep-stealing. When the culprit saw the policeman, he said, "You are a nice one, coming on a stolen horse to arrest me for stealing! That is my master's horse that you are riding on; look under the mane and you will see it is branded with such and such letters." It was one of the horses that had been stolen two years previously, and it then came out that the policeman's brother was the thief. Though every Kaffir on the farm had known it at the time, not one of them had told. I admire this trait in their character; it shows they have affection for each other. A Kaffir child will always share any food given it with the others; and they never allow a poor Kaffir to starve while they have anything to give him.

They are very clever in tracing footsteps, called "tracing the spoor." I am told that when sheep or cattle are stolen the Kaffirs can often follow the footprints for three days, right over both road and veld. When ruled by their chiefs the law was that if cattle were traced to any land the owner of it must trace the spoor on to some one else's land; then they took it up, and so on till the animals were found. Any one who could not trace the spoor off his own land was considered to be the thief, and punished accordingly. The farmers think it a great pity that this law has been done away with, as it made each native a sort of detective, and taught them to keep each other's stealing propensities in check.

The old Kaffir laws were simple but severe. Years ago a Kaffir was imprisoned for stealing sheep from some farmers. His chief sent a message to the

authorities asking that the man might be delivered up to him when released ; he had a case to settle with him for stealing from other Kaffirs. The man was accordingly sent. Soon afterwards the chief sent them word that there would be no more trouble with that man, as he had been killed. His case was apparently considered to be hopeless.

That a Kaffir is very clever in devising means of stealing the following incident will show. A shop-keeper used to put his money in a small basin which stood on a shelf against the wall. A counter ran across the shop, so no one could get round to the basin nor reach over to where it was. But the man began to miss coins from it, how or where they went remaining for some time a mystery. Many Kaffirs came to the shop. They almost always carry a stick with them and keep pointing with it to anything on the shelves that they want. One day the shop-man caught one of the Kaffirs with his stick in the money basin. He had a piece of damp clay at the end of it, to which one or more coins would stick and be quickly transferred to the Kaffir's pocket !

The flesh of the Kaffir heals with wonderful rapidity. I am told that a hurt which would lay up a white man for a fortnight will only keep a Kaffir from his work a couple of days.

One tribe has a custom of cutting a joint off the third finger of the left hand. A Kaffir on the farm had a girl of ten whose finger had not been so cut. She was not very well, and he thought that his neglect of the custom was the reason, so the end of her finger was cut off. It was then daubed over with some sort of black salve, not

wrapped up. The second day after, the girl came to the house, and I saw her come from the kitchen eating a piece of bread which she held in her left hand, merely keeping the cut finger up out of the way.

If a sick Kaffir is going to die, he is carried and laid outside the hut, as they do not like any one to die inside. The bodies are buried on the day of their death, in a sitting posture.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE KAFFIR AND CIVILISATION.

Religious Beliefs — Circumcision — Witchcraft — Lightning —
Morals—Happy Life—Education—Nicknames—Prophet—
Language.

WHAT little I have been able to learn of the religion of the Kaffirs has been told me by those who have been brought up among them and understand their language well.

They believe in one God, the giver of all that is good, and in an evil spirit, who, they say, is God's son ; but he was wicked, so his Father turned him out of the house, and that is the reason he hates God and tries to do so much mischief everywhere. They know they ought to do what they think is right, but say they cannot help doing the wrong. It appears to me that the Kaffir troubles but little about religion, and formerly possessed more knowledge of God than he now has. There seems to be some lost idea of sacrifice. On certain occasions an animal is slain and eaten as a feast for one of the family, otherwise evil will befall them. When about twenty the youths are circumcised, and used to keep up a feast for some weeks afterwards, going in groups of twenty or more from kraal to kraal dancing, singing, and

beer-drinking till they had been throughout the tribe. They wore a peculiar dress made of grass. The old farmer who told me about it regretted that the English have prohibited it, as he said there was nothing objectional about it, and it was an old tribal custom.

Kaffirs are firm believers in witchcraft, but say a white man can neither bewitch nor be bewitched. All deaths, excepting from old age, are supposed to be caused by witchcraft, especially those from lightning.

They say lightning is a bird, and during a thunder-storm a Kaffir will sit in the door of his hut with his assagai, or spear, in his hand to keep it away. Though the Kaffirs will eat animals that die a natural death they will never eat one that has been killed by lightning, and if a hut is struck, the witch doctor has to come and various ceremonies have to be gone through before those who were in it may mix again with their fellows.

I must say that after what one hears of heathen darkness I was surprised at the healthy, happy life these people lead. Yet why should we be? God is love, and loves the heathen Kaffir as well as the white Christian. If our neglect to carry them the gospel has left them in darkness, God mercifully visits their sins with the few stripes due to him who knew not his Lord's will; not with the many stripes deserved by the wilfully rebellious. Do not mistake me, the moral darkness is real and awful, but I think missionaries have dwelt too exclusively on the dark side, and by so doing have really defeated their own ends.

The question is this: Shall the Kaffir continue to lead his ignorant life of animal enjoyment, or shall he be educated and Christianised?

A little thought will convince us that it is impossible for him to remain as he is. Either immediately, or through the influence of relatives who have lived among the white men, he is brought each year more into contact with them. And, worst of all, everywhere the white man's brandy is ready for him—vile, burning stuff, that even the white drunkard does not touch, but which the white Christian will allow to be sold openly to the poor Kaffir, only troubling to grumble if his own servants get hold of it. Even the Kaffirs themselves wish it were kept out of their way; but they are just like children, they cannot resist temptation; if it is there they must have it.

It is not now a question of leaving the Kaffir to his old life. It is, Shall he be raised higher or sink lower? At its best his old life is only that of a happy animal, content to eat, drink, and enjoy himself, with no desire for improvement in this life, and no hope of the life to come. The command of Christ is plain to every Christian, "Preach the gospel to every creature." It does not say to every white man. Perhaps it is the disregarding of this command that makes the Christianity of South Africa seem so lifeless. There can be no such thing as "the selfish saving of one's own soul."

Many Christians here have heathen servants in their houses, and on their farms, year after year; they can both speak and read Kaffir well, but they never try to teach those servants anything about Christ. Yet they are the very ones who, if they

lived consistent lives before these people, would have much more influence with them than the missionary.

With Kaffir missions I have not had the opportunity of becoming acquainted ; but, without a single exception, those to whom I have spoken on the subject declare that few mission Kaffirs are thoroughly reliable. Here and there is a real Christian ; but, being naturally deceitful, many pretend to be Christians because they think it advantageous to do so, and education only makes them conceited and more cunning in wickedness. How far this is true I cannot say, but it is certainly the general opinion of the colonists, and so they say, "Let the Kaffir alone ; you only make him worse by educating him."

Before we say this we ought to consider carefully whether we are trying to educate him in the right manner, and it is just here that I think the cause of much failure comes in. The English have little wisdom as to the manner of educating their own people. Some one has said that a board-school child's mind is like a pitcher taken to a pump to be filled ; no effort is made to enlarge the pitcher or to teach the possessor thereof the art of filling it for himself. We all know the effect of "cram" upon cleverly-shallow, conceited natures. They know everything there is to be known about every subject you can mention ; you can teach them nothing, for they know immeasurably more than you do. Now, if this is the effect on a class of people descended from ancestors civilised and, to some extent, educated, can we wonder that the evil effects are even greater when you begin to "cram" the ignorant savage ? So far as I can learn this is just what is being done.

The Cape Government is doing all it can to encourage native "education." The children in the native schools are put through their standards just as white children are. They learn to read and write English, also grammar, poetry, everything that an English child would learn, and what good does it do them? Nine times out of ten it makes them cleverer in wrong-doing, because real "education," which is the development of the powers of the mind and the strengthening of the moral nature, has not progressed as the acquisition of knowledge has.

To me it seems manifestly absurd to take a raw Kaffir, fill him with knowledge, expect him to use it rightly, and when he does not, throw him away as hopeless. Knowledge ought only to be given in proportion as the power and desire to use it rightly are developed.

The Kaffir nation is in its childhood, and wants the training of a child. They want to be taught about God, and helped to be honest, truthful, modest, and industrious. To learn to read their own language, and be supplied with helpful literature in it, would be far better for them, at present, than a knowledge of English.

The old monks who patiently taught our Saxon ancestors had a good deal more common sense about such matters than we have. What would have been the result if they had tried to give those rude barbarians a smattering of Greek and Roman learning? Instead, they taught them to be truthful and honest, to cultivate the land better, to be kind to man and beast, to give up heathen cruelties, to love war less, and the arts of peace more. They spent their lives thus, and lay

down to rest often thinking that they had accomplished little ; but they had helped to lay the foundations of a nation's character, strong and secure, on which a superstructure of knowledge could be reared later. We to-day inherit the fruits of their labours, yet we go to the poor Kaffir, who is in no wise worse than were our own ancestors in those bygone days, and if we cannot in one generation raise him to the level of ourselves, we trouble no more about him.

Let us use common sense and patience, and, above all, live consistent Christian lives before these Kaffirs, and it is not yet too late to save them.

I ask the reader's pardon for this long digression, but these raw Kaffirs have gained a great hold upon my affections. It seems very hard to see them ruined, and so little done to save them.

Though their reasoning powers are undeveloped, the Kaffirs are wonderfully quick of observation, and very clever in reading character, much more so than we are.

Every white person about a farm has a Kaffir nickname by which he is spoken of among themselves. It is based on some peculiarity of appearance or character, so they wait till a new-comer has been among them awhile before he is named. A farmer who is ready with his foot if his servants displease him is called by a Kaffir name which means "the kicker." One wearing spectacles is "four-eyes" ; a mistress who has her pans quite emptied, "the pan-scraper"—the servants always expect the leavings to be plentiful. My own designation was "a lover of fowls."

At the time I was at the farm a Kaffir prophet

was creating great excitement among them. Eventually he was sent to a lunatic asylum. He was an educated Kaffir, called himself the son of God, told them that all the white men were going to be driven into the sea, and a lot of nonsense. At last he was arrested and taken to prison ; but he told the people that he would open the doors and come out again, and they believed all that he said.

A day or two after his imprisonment there was great excitement among the farm "boys." They had heard that when the jailer went to the prison the next morning, every door was wide open, but not a prisoner was gone, as the prophet only wanted to show them what he could do if he wished.

The farmer's son said to one of the old Kaffirs, "Now, I will give you a sovereign if it is not all a lie, and I will lend you a horse, and let you ride over to the prison and see." But the old man pretended he did not believe it himself, so he would not go.

The farmer afterwards made the same offer to a younger one, who went to the first to ask his advice about taking it. The old Kaffir said, "No, don't. I know it is all true, and the master would lose ; but you see it would always be a sort of sore place to him after to think he had lost his money, so you had better not."

These poor people are often deluded by false prophets. Over forty years ago a young girl persuaded the Kaffirs to kill all their cattle. She was a ventriloquist and used to make them hear cattle bellowing up in the air and under the ground. The cattle were all to rise again so many days after being slain. She got them to believe her, and the cattle

were killed ; many Kaffirs dying in the famine which followed.

The language of the Kaffirs is euphonious, vowel sounds are abundant, and the words seem to follow each other very smoothly. I am told that it is very expressive too, and has well-defined grammatical inflections. Grown people seldom learn to speak it well on account of the clicks, but can make themselves understood in it. Children acquire it readily. One of the clicks we often make alone by pressing the tongue sharply against the back of the teeth. It is easy enough to do by itself, but mixed up with other letters, sometimes right in the middle of them, it is quite another thing.

CHAPTER XIV.

MY NEW SITUATION.

My Room — Carpeting — Chickens — School — Adders — Picnic —
Roots — Dinner — Queenstown — Goods Train — Rain —
Drifts — Mrs. Africander — Fruit — Baking — Sundays — Rail-
way-Schools — Climate.

DURING my stay at the farm I had been advertising and answering advertisements, but all to no purpose; I either heard no more of my letters, or had a polite note saying they were already suited. At last I had a place offered in the Free State; and, as we all thought the war scare was blowing over, was just going to accept it when I heard of one only a few miles away (a few is anything short of a hundred here).

It was not long before I was comfortably settled at my new place. It was a pleasant and good-sized house, with a garden close to it, and willows and poplars near. The railway station was only a quarter of an hour's walk off; and as we stood on higher ground we could see the station and passing trains very plainly. We had a view of about six miles along the broad valley bordered by steep, stony hills, more bare of vegetation than where I had been before. For, as we were higher, and nearer to the

great Stormberg Mountains, it was more bleak. The station looked very pretty, with a tall eucalyptus tree and several of other kinds growing near it. The village consisted of an hotel, a shop, a railway-schoolhouse and half a dozen houses.

An oblong brick building stood near the house, and consisted of three rooms ; the middle one, into which the outside door opened, was our pleasant schoolroom. At one end of this was the bedroom of the two girls of the family ; the other room was my own. It was a snug little apartment, the door from the school entering at the side, and it had a window at each end, so that I had the view towards the station from one, and could watch the little lambs at play on the rocky hill-slope from the other. We took care of our own rooms, and every Saturday carried all our possessions, including beds and bedding, out into the sun, while the Kaffir girl put us new "carpets." It used to smell so nice and sweet that night ! Our beds were very comfortable ; they were made of the husks of the mealies.

The days were lengthening, and I began to get up at five. I employed myself in looking after the little chickens, no one else being much interested in them. The children had some pigeons, and they, too, used to come and be fed, sitting on my head and eating out of my hand. It was from this that I got my Kaffir name, "A lover of fowls."

Before seven we began music lessons. Breakfast was at eight ; school from nine to twelve, and from two till four. Dinner was at one, tea from six to seven. The children were always off to bed when tea was over. I followed about eight.

It was much quieter here than at the other farm, as the people had but recently come to it and had not so many acquaintances in the neighbourhood. I had five children to teach, and enjoyed the school work very much ; but apart from that, after the novelty has worn off, a governess's life on these farms gets very monotonous. One needs daily exercise, but with only three or four roads available, with which you soon get familiar, and nowhere to go, walks become rather aimless and uninteresting. At first I enjoyed scrambling over the rocky hills noticing the wild-flowers, but as the weather got warmer, this form of amusement received an unexpected check. The snakes began to awaken from their winter sleep, and lie among the rocks to sun themselves. Not little harmless reptiles, but great lazy puff adders, that will not move out of your way, but will give you a bite, if disturbed, that may cost you your life. After nearly stepping on one, and seeing how very much like the mottled ground they looked, and finding that the farm fairly swarmed with them—one hundred and eight adders, beside other kinds, having been killed by the former master in two months—my zeal for mountain rambles considerably abated.

One Saturday the ox waggon, drawn by six oxen, was going to "the top camp," at the far extremity of the farm, three miles off, to bring home thorn trees for firewood, so we had a picnic, and all went. The waggon, of course, had no springs, and going over a farm track which made no pretensions of being a road, and was plentifully bestrewn with stones, was not a luxurious mode of travelling ; but

a large bag of wool was provided for me, and seated on that I found the vehicle very comfortable. What we lacked in luxury we made up for in enjoyment. It was a beautiful day, bright, with a hot sun, but just breeze enough to make it pleasantly cool.

When we arrived at our destination, the oxen were unspanned, the Kaffirs began cutting down thorn trees, the Kaffir girl that we had brought collected sticks, made a fire in a sheltered nook, and began preparing dinner, while we strolled about examining the place. We were close to the foot of a steep, stony hill. A river began there, and its bed was worn some twenty feet below the surface. It was almost dry, only a few little pools appearing ; so we could clamber down and walk along it. I was surprised to notice the roots of the thorn trees on the banks, where they had been left exposed ; after coming sideways for several yards to reach the river bank, they had then gone straight down until they got under the stream, when they would probably throw out rootlets. Some were more than three times longer than the height of the tree. The roots of the bushes and little plants on the edge of the banks were also remarkably long. The drying winds take all the moisture from the surface of the land very quickly, even after a rain, so only those things that can get moisture from far beneath can flourish. Thorn trees were plentiful on both sides of the river for some distance along its banks ; but with South African recklessness, instead of lopping off the large branches, the trees themselves were cut down, and though a few may grow again, many would be killed.

When dinner was ready we seated ourselves on the ground in shady spots and partook of it in truly primitive fashion. It consisted of dry bread and chops broiled by being laid on the red-hot wood embers. Only one plate had been brought. On this the repast was piled and handed round. With a piece of bread in one hand and a chop in the other, we partook of our dinner in doggie simplicity ; but enjoyed it none the less for that. A bottle of buttermilk had been brought for me ; the rest had coffee.

After dinner we strolled about awhile longer till the waggon was loaded, then climbed into the little space left for us at the front of the vehicle, and got back with our load of wood about five o'clock.

Another Saturday we went to Queenstown, going by the six o'clock train. One of the children being asked what it was named from, said it was because all the gardens had quince hedges. He thought the name was Quincetown !

It is a pretty town, a good-sized one for this part, having over four thousand inhabitants. Its centre is a large market-place in the form of a regular hexagon, from each corner of which a street runs straight outwards from the centre. This form was adopted so that cannon might be placed in the centre of the market-place and turned to fire up the streets in any direction in case of the town being attacked by the natives when it was first settled. It is an arrangement very confusing to strangers. The town being well supplied with water the gardens were green and flourishing ; water flows along the side of the streets, and trees

are planted. Each house appeared to have a good-sized piece of garden-ground, and quince hedges seemed to be the favourite fence between back gardens. The principal buildings had a good, substantial appearance, and the whole town looked clean and comfortable ; all the dwelling-houses, as in the country, were one-storeyed. In the hottest weather the town is not very healthy, being shut in rather too much by surrounding hills, but at other times it is a very pleasant place of residence.

The rest of the family were spending Sunday there, and as there was no passenger train until evening, I availed myself of the three o'clock goods train. You are allowed to travel by goods train if you will sign a declaration freeing the company from any liability in case of accident. Usually you must go in the guard's van, but as there were more passengers on a Saturday, an old passenger car was attached for our accommodation. There is not very much difference between passenger and goods trains in the matter of speed, but the latter are often kept waiting some time at stations. I enjoyed my ride in the luggage train very much, as my companions were talkative, and began discussing the doings of several doctors in neighbouring towns. One elderly man gave an amusing account of his experiences when having the measles as a boy. It was in the days when cold water was looked on with horror if patients were feverish. He begged and begged for a drink of it ; but in vain. He was left alone for awhile, and saw the large pitcher full of water on the washstand at the other side of the room. He thought, " I know I shall die, but I will

have a drink before I do." So he crept out of bed to the pitcher, tipped it up, and drank and drank till it was emptied down his throat and over his shirt. Wet, but satisfied, he crept back into bed, just as some one who had heard a noise came to ascertain the cause. At once the house was alarmed and the doctor sent for. By the time he arrived the boy was in a profuse perspiration. The gruff old doctor just looked at him, said, "He'll do," and turned round and walked out of the house.

Just before leaving the other farm, in the middle of August, there was a nice rain, the hills began to get green and every one was rejoicing at the good prospects for an early spring; but no more rain followed, and the beautiful green tints disappeared. How we longed for rain! but instead came winds, cold and biting, and cloudy days, even fog several mornings, but no rain. The garden was irrigated, and never have I seen fruit blossom more beautiful. The large almond tree, and apricot, pear, and plum trees had their white blossom; and the peach was exquisite, some of dark and some of delicate tint. The figs were partly grown, about as big as damsons, when, alas! a sharp frost came; the figs were all spoiled and some of the hardier things nipped. The farmer said, "Never mind, the figs will sprout out again and bear a second time, only it will make them a month or so later." They did. The blackened stems were soon again covered with green leaves and little figs were just formed. The grapes had passed out of flower into the rudiments of abundant fruit. A large field of potatoes was so nearly ready that a few might be dug, when lo!

another frost, more severe than the last, destroyed everything. On figs and grapes neither leaf nor fruit was left ; not one green leaf was left in the potato field, and the wheat, which was near ripening, was much damaged. This was in the middle of October, a fortnight later than frosts are expected.

Thunderstorms kept coming near, but passing around us. It never seems to rain here without thunder, and it is very grand to watch the lightning flashes in the evening over the far-off hills ; the brilliant forked lightning sometimes passing from cloud to cloud, sometimes descending to the earth. The electrical conditions always seem peculiar. You can stroke a cat in the middle of a hot sunny day and its fur will lie in ridges just as it does only in dry severe frost in England. One's hair flies about when being combed, too, as if influenced by electricity. It seems to me there are exceptional facilities for scientific investigation of electrical phenomena in this part of the world.

At last a thunderstorm came to us. It began at two o'clock, and poured in torrents till four. Just as school was over it cleared. I could see at a little distance a cloud of smoke, or steam, rising from the ground, which rather puzzled me. Soon the children came running. "Come and see the river." This river, which ran through the farm, had been quite dry ever since I came. We went towards the cloud of steam, which was really the spray rising from the water, as it dashed down the steep rocks at that part of its course. It was a sight I shall never forget. A raging, roaring torrent, so thick with mud as to be the colour of rich chocolate, came

dashing along and falling down the rough rocks, garnishing itself with foam and sending up clouds of spray. Farther down, where the bed was flat and the stream not too deep to wade, I was told that it would not be safe for a man to attempt to cross it, so strong was the current. These small rivers are rarely bridged; roads go right through them, sloping down the steep banks and up again like a wide V. They soon go down after the showers are over, but the inexperienced are often drowned in attempting to cross them while flooded.

Beside the rivers there are "drifts," which are channels cut in the ground by the heavy showers. The rain comes down in such torrents that only a small part soaks into the soil; the rest rushes down the hillsides, collecting in hollows, and, cutting channels for itself, it forces its way onward till it joins the river. These channels are made wider and deeper by each succeeding storm until they equal the rivers in size, but are quite dry soon after a shower ceases.

We had not much company, but one of our neighbours, "an Africander"—that is, one born in the colony—was a study in the way of character. She called one day when a Dutch neighbour was also in, and they began talking about fruit trees. The Dutch neighbour said she had heard that if you cut a slit in a barren pear tree and put a penny in, it would make it bear. Mrs. Africander did not believe in being beaten in the marvellous by a Dutchwoman, so she replied most seriously that it was a fact that if you cut a slit in a peach tree and put a penny in, the tree would bear peaches without stones!

Another day the farmer, who for several reasons had baked two or three times in succession, was boasting rather more than was necessary of his skill as a baker. Mrs. Africander listened a while, then replied scornfully, "Why, any dunce can make good bread out of good meal ; a good baker is one who can make good bread out of poor meal." We heard less about the baking after that.

On Sundays I used to have a Sunday-school class for the children at eleven o'clock, and had to spend the rest of the day in reading, as there was only service once while I stayed. That was held in the railway-schoolhouse by the station.

The railway-school is another of the contrivances for the education of children here. The schools are built beside stations at which a train arrives at a suitable time in the morning, and there is also one for returning in the afternoon. I was much puzzled once while in a train to find it stopping several times at what appeared to be just cottages, not stations, by the side of the line. I thought perhaps we were changing guards. I learned afterwards that we were setting down school-children. The men who keep the lines in repair, called "gangers," live in cottages along the line, and their children, as well as others who may live near enough to join the trains, are conveyed back and forth each day, free, I believe, and set down as near as may be to their own homes. Some of these schools are flourishing, having forty or fifty scholars.

On the whole I liked my life in South Africa very much, but never could get to quite like the climate. I came to the eastern portion of the colony partly

because the first situation that offered was there, and partly because I thought it would be pleasanter to be where the rains came mostly in summer. I found out my mistake. The western part gets warm rain and little wind in the winter, but in the east it is the frequent cold winds that are unpleasant; and it is not nearly so healthy to have the rain in the hottest part of the year. This neighbourhood is noted for its sudden variations of temperature. A gentleman living in Queenstown told me that one day in summer he looked at his thermometer hanging in the shade in the middle of the afternoon. It was 98° ; he looked ten minutes after, and it was 57° . A cold, biting wind had risen and the air here, 4,000 feet up, is so thin that changes in temperature seem to be effected almost instantaneously.

CHAPTER XV.

STUDIES OF NATURE.

Wild-Flowers—Ferns — Birds — “Quackie” — Hanging Nests
—Robin—Doves — Baboons—Spring Hare—Rats—Snake-
Fights—Lizards—Reaping—Ticks—Flies.

THE new plants and living creatures here are very interesting. Beautiful little wild-flowers peep out of the ground, often with no leaves, or dry, bare-looking stems; and bushes burst into flower immediately after rain, as if anxious to get their flowering over and seeds formed as soon as possible, not knowing how long it may be before another shower comes. The wild-flowers are of varying colour, but bright yellow, I think, predominates and gives the brown veld a cheerful appearance. On the stony hills the variegated-leaved geranium is plentiful, and pretty ferns grow under the shade of the great rocks. Some are much like a maiden-hair fern in the form of the leaf, but are not delicate; they are thick and leathery, made to withstand drought and drying winds.

Birds which were strange to me are very numerous. I am sorry that I have had no opportunity of learning their names, with the exception of the dear little “quackie,” as the children call it—a sweet little wagtail

almost identical with the English variety, but very bold. For some reason the Kaffirs will never kill them, and they seem to have no fear of man, keeping close to the spade if any one is digging, to look for worms.

A very beautiful bird, much disliked by the farmers, is about the size of a lark, jet black with orange on the top of each wing. Its black tail is about three times the length of its body, and stretches out behind it in a slight curve. The wings are rather short, and it flies in an undulating line, its long tail swaying gracefully in the wind. It is a pretty sight to see fifty or more rise from the wheatfield and fly into some trees or bushes near till you have gone past. Their beautiful hanging nests are skilfully woven out of long grass, or often of wheat, of which they destroy quantities.

There is a robin exactly like our English friend in shape, action, and boldness, but much larger, and in place of red his breast and also his tail are of a brownish yellow. Sparrows and swallows look like the English birds, but are brighter in hue. The wild doves are very pretty, of a shiny bronze colour. I much wanted to get some young ones, as they are easily tamed.

There were many other sorts of birds, some very pretty; but I can tell you nothing interesting about them, so will not try to describe them.

Parrots are numerous near the coast; also little monkeys, but it is too cold for them on the plateaus. Baboons are plentiful in some of the hills and are very troublesome in summer, stealing mealies and fruit. When in a wild state, they apparently exercise

their powers of imitation for their own benefit, as I am told they will go to a field, tie the mealie cobs together by their husks, hang them on a stick, and carry them off, just as they have watched the Kaffirs do. They are able to count up to three it is said, but not more. Let three men go to the field and two come back, leaving the third hidden, waiting to shoot the baboons when they come; not one will leave his rocky hiding-place till they have seen the third man depart; but let four or five men go and return, leaving one of their number behind, the baboons will soon show themselves, thinking all have gone. A Scotch farmer told me that he doubted this statement when it was made to him, but he tried the experiment himself and found it quite true.

There are no rabbits here, but the spring hare, which seems to somewhat resemble a small kangaroo, is equally destructive to green crops.

Pretty little field-rats are plentiful among the rocks. If you sit down quietly they will come out and peep shyly at you with their sharp, bright eyes. They are innocent, gentle-looking creatures, living on the seeds of wild-plants; not at all like house-rats. These latter have been imported by the ships and are now everywhere. At the farm where I stayed they had none for many years, but a thrashing machine came to the place, and as the men were getting it ready for work two rats ran out of it. Search was made for them, but in vain. It was not long, however, before they were very plentiful about the place, and they have remained ever since.

Some of the natives are very clever in the use of

herbs. The way they discover the best antidote for snake-bites is very interesting. Snakes, it seems, sometimes fight with each other. If a Kaffir happens to see two snakes fighting, he quietly watches them, perhaps for hours. After fighting for a time, they will stop, crawl away from each other, and eat the leaves of some bush. They will then have another struggle, and again go back to the bushes, and so continue till one of them is killed. It is supposed that they eat the leaves as an antidote to the poison of each other's bites, and the Kaffirs think that the bush from which the victorious snake ate is the better of the two ; so they gather its leaves to use as their remedy for snake-bite. I should suppose myself that the bushes were equally good, the difference being in the strength of the snakes. However that may be, these Kaffir remedies are said to be excellent. The farmer who told me of this practice had no doubt of its being done, though he had not really seen it ; but only a short time previously he overheard one Kaffir grumbling at another because when he had seen two snakes fighting he did not stop to watch them, and so find out a fresh bush.

Little harmless lizards are plentiful, and there is a creature about a yard long which looks like a small alligator. It lives among the rocks, and makes havoc of eggs and young chickens. I made the acquaintance of one rather funnily. We elders were talking after dinner one day when one of the children ran in excitedly. "Come, quick, there is such a big thing down in the field!" We all ran after him, shouting, "Where? where?" staring about for a deer, or something quite as large ; but could see nothing.

At last the father saw it hidden among the grass. Picking up a thick piece of wood that lay near, he said, "See, it is here ; but keep away, they can run like lightning." I never waited to see what it was. I had just had a horror of puff adders and scorpions instilled into me, and wondered what it was going to be next ; so I set off as hard as I could go, out of the way. We had a good laugh about my precipitous flight afterwards. The poor thing was soon dispatched, and I have its skin, much like a snake-skin, beautifully mottled. It has sharp claws and little sharp teeth, but if attacked defends itself with its tail, with which it can give very powerful blows.

Reaping is performed in the most primitive manner. "Whereof the mower filleth not his hand" sounds a strange expression to us. If you watch the Kaffir cutting wheat with his little sickle—not scythe—you understand what it means. He takes hold of a handful with his left hand, cuts it off with his sickle, and lays it on the ground ; then another handful, and so on. In time the field is reaped ; but native labour is cheap, so time counts but little.

Poultry are useful in a novel way. They help to clear the cattle of ticks. These little insects bury their heads in the skin, and suck the blood, remaining fast on the animal, looking like a dirty, dark-coloured bead, in reality a drop of blood with a thin skin around it. It is amusing to watch a hen get them off an ox's body. She walks around, inspecting him carefully till she sees a tick, then she jumps and generally gets it ; the ox sometimes turning his head and looking at her with a sort of questioning astonishment, but never objecting to the attention.

Large and poisonous spiders are plentiful, so in summer-time are flies; but instead of having door and window-frames covered with mosquito netting to keep flies out as in America, folks resort to the miserable unhealthy practice of shutting the rooms up dark.

Scorpions are numerous among the rocks. But none of these things care much for the sharp frosts of winter, so but few are seen till the hot summer approaches.

CHAPTER XVI.

WAR AND FLIGHT.

War Begun—Refugees—Volunteers—Freedom of Speech—News
— Alarms — Left Undefended — Trains Stopping — Night
Journey — Fellow-Travellers — My Ship — East London —
Wind—Seashore—Delay.

THE news that there was really to be war between Boer and Briton took us all by surprise ; we had just ceased to expect it when it came. Then followed the exodus from Johannesburg, of which we heard and saw much. Crowded trains passed us daily, and we learned of the sufferings of those who had been obliged to leave, not from the newspapers only, but from their friends and relatives, which made it seem much more real. A man and wife coming to our neighbourhood got separated in the crowd, he getting put on a goods train. Unfortunately she had all the money, he not having a penny with him. He was three days on the road without food, and arrived almost famished. His wife, who had come quicker, was most anxiously awaiting him.

Soon the volunteers were called out, not by any means to the satisfaction of many. Though there is a bitter feeling between Dutch and English generally, even in the colony, yet little Cupid has

been quietly doing his best to get the two nations to understand each other better. Many a Dutchman has his English wife, and many a young Englishman has been charmed by a buxom Dutch girl. Now these latter found themselves in an awkward position, as joining in the war meant fighting against their wife's relations, which they felt no inclination to do. Others, again, were delighted to go. Everywhere there was nothing talked of but the war, and some pretty strong things were said here and there about the causes of it. This was put a stop to by the Governor's proclamation, which was posted up in the railway stations and other public places, threatening with imprisonment any one who criticised in any way the policy of the Government.

What a step it seemed back into the dark ages! One does not realise the deprivation it must have been in olden times not to be able to speak out one's thoughts, to condemn what one believes wrong, and to uphold the right; but experience it ever so slightly, and you understand, as never before, what the freedom of the press and freedom of speech mean. Our thoughts were not bound, if our words were, nor was our interest abated in what was going on. We were always looking and listening for news, but news was very hard to get hold of. What appeared in the newspaper one week was more or less contradicted the next, and all sorts of rumours of defeats and victories were circulated by word of mouth. I used to say that people in England knew twice as much of what was going on as we did.

All this time we had felt quite at ease and secure; we did not expect the war to come near us. Though

we were only about sixty miles from the Free State boundary, the great Stormberg Mountains formed an impassable barrier on our north, the only pass over them being guarded by a force of volunteers ; so we felt quite safe.

Suddenly we were electrified with the news that the Boers were advancing in our direction, and, as there were not sufficient troops at the pass to stand against them, all had been ordered back to Queenstown. For two days we watched the crowded trains come down, till soldiers, luggage, and horses were all safely removed to our rear, leaving us right in the track of the possibly advancing foe.

Then began a general stampede among the farmers farther north. The main road went close by the railway just near us, so we could see droves of cattle and flocks of sheep, Cape carts and ox waggons, all trekking on to Queenstown and beyond. Soon one by one the farmers in our neighbourhood began to join the stream. The "gangers" living in the cottages along the line were ordered to be in readiness to leave their homes at any time with an hour's notice. The station-master sent his family towards the coast. All this was not reassuring, for railway people were supposed to know more than others, as all the telegrams went through their hands.

The next Monday at dinner-time we were told that the last train down to Queenstown would probably run that afternoon. The family I was with were very kind ; they had decided to stay on their farm and risk things getting worse, but if I liked to go I could do so. The railway-school was being continued, though with but half its number, and they

could send the children there for awhile. It was a difficult matter to decide in a hurry, yet in a hurry it must be done; if I went, I must go while I had the chance. I considered the prospects. The frost had already spoiled all the fruit. If the Boers came they would take all the stock, then we should have neither meat, milk, nor butter. It did not seem that I could do any particular good by staying, and in case of either flight or famine I should be only one more to care for, so I concluded that discretion was the better part of valour, and decided to leave. But to go by that afternoon train seemed out of the question; for one thing, my clothes were in the washtub, so I ventured to risk getting as far as Queenstown in somebody's ox waggon, if nothing else were available.

The trains did not quite stop after all; one went up at eight in the morning, another came down at four in the afternoon, but each might be the last. The armour-train was going up and down the line to see that all was safe. We saw it once, as we were at the station when it came up. What a hideous thing it is! Each carriage is like a tremendous oblong iron box, having a narrow slit running along the top, out of which the men inside can peep, and shoot if necessary. The engine, too, is well cased in iron, and the driver's box can be tightly shut in.

As it was not at all safe travelling to go back by rail as I had come, I had to go down to East London and sail along the coast to Cape Town. I could not ascertain when there was a steamer, so arranged to go on the Wednesday and risk being at the right time for one. At four o'clock on a Wednesday

afternoon in November I started. I much regretted having to make the journey by night, but there was no choice ; only the night train was running.

A lady with two little children and a Kaffir nurse travelled with me for about three hours from Queenstown. She had been staying there for several weeks, and was now going to join her husband, who had brought the sheep and cattle down from their farm, which was near the borders of the Free State. She said they had left a comfortable house full of furniture, and excellent crops just ready for harvesting, and had brought the stock away in the hope of being able to save that ; all else would probably be lost.

Our ideas of war are too often confined to the accounts of defeat or victory on the battle-field, but there is beside a great undercurrent of suffering, real and awful, though comparatively unnoticed.

The night should have been moonlight, but, instead, was cloudy and pitch dark, nothing being visible out of the windows but a watch-fire here and there, as we passed the camps of volunteers that were guarding the railway bridges.

After my companions got out, I rolled myself in one of my rugs, put my pillow under my head and, contrary to my expectation, enjoyed a sound sleep. When it got light in the morning we had reached the lower lands near the coast. The scenery was pretty, the land hilly and undulating ; but they were no longer the strange South African hills ; the peculiar characteristics had all disappeared.

At six o'clock we reached East London. There I received the joyful news that the very ship I had

come out in was just dropping anchor opposite the town.

December and January are the hottest months, so November ought to be fairly warm; it, however, differed little from August, having cold winds and chilly, cloudy days; but I expected to find it quite different on the coast. Instead, I found a terrific cold wind blowing, and clouds of dust, which I was told had continued for a month past. Seldom have I encountered such a gale. Sometimes I had to take my hat off and carry it, putting my cape around my head, while exploring the town.

I was disappointed in East London. The farmers had praised it so much—why should they not? it was the finest place they had ever seen! I had found Cape Town so much exceed my anticipations that I expected too much of this. But really for a town not forty years old East London is a fine place. It is well laid out on a grand scale. The market-place is immense, the streets wide and straight. There are good shops in it, but for the most part the buildings are poor and mean-looking, as if the least amount possible had been spent on them; many are evidently only intended to be temporary. The wind and dust prevented much enjoyment in the matter of sightseeing. I took a walk down on the beach to get some shells from the Indian Ocean and found some very pretty ones, quite new to me. The wind was so strong that the flying sand fairly stung the back of my hand when I reached down to pick the shells up. The sea was grand; great, white-crested waves rolling in one after another, and sending up showers of spray as they broke on the corner of the

breakwater or over the rocks. My ship was riding at anchor right opposite some distance out. We should have gone on board at three o'clock, but on reaching the office were told that the sea was so rough the tug could not go out ; so I was obliged to put up at an hotel for the night and see what the weather would be in the morning.

CHAPTER XVII.

ALONG THE COAST.

The Tug—The Bar—Getting Aboard—Volunteers—Port Elizabeth—Cargo—Mossel Bay—Capes Agulhas and Good Hope—Cape Town—The “Cape Doctor”—Troopship—Newspapers—Our Passenger—Coaling—Dockers—Table Bay—Divers—Penguins—Off at Last.

AT ten o'clock the next morning the little *Midge* steamed away from the jetty in the Buffalo River to take us to the steamship. The wind was not nearly so high, though the sea still remained rough, but in the river it was quite calm. Just as we started a hard shower began, which drove all the ladies but myself into the little cabin. It was just over as we reached the bar.

“Hold on!” was shouted to us by the boatmen, and we soon found the need of the order; our little craft began to dance about like a cork as soon as she got in the open sea, and rolled and pitched in a way that would have dashed us off our seats if we had not held on tightly. Only the best of sailors could stand that sort of thing comfortably, and I was most thankful when we got near the great ship; but near and alongside are two very different things in a rough sea. It seemed as if that tug never would get properly fastened so that

we could get off, but at last the work of getting us on board began.

The process was quite a novel one to me. A large cylindrical basket, higher than a man, was let down to us by the steamer's derrick, and stood on the middle of our deck. A door in the side of it was opened and half a dozen of us at a time packed in; the door was then shut and fastened, and up it flew in the air, and, after bobbing about several seconds, as if uncertain what to do next, made a sudden plunge towards the ship. Then we were dropped upon the ship's deck, our prison door was opened, and we joyfully set foot on something that was comparatively still. The sensations of the basket-ride would not be particularly enjoyable under any circumstances, but following the tossing on that tug were simply dreadful. However, I soon recovered sufficiently from the effects to enjoy watching a tug-load of volunteers being embarked in a similar manner—only their basket had no door and was lower, so three at a time climbed into it, and crouched down while they were swung aboard. It is very funny to watch some one else when you are safe on the ship!

As the steamship had not been able to take in cargo the day before, and there was a considerable quantity to come on board, we did not set sail till eight o'clock in the evening.

In the fore part of the ship a number of regular soldiers were quartered, their officers being in the second class. Our part of the ship was filled with volunteers who were being conveyed to Cape Town. There were only five women and the whole saloon

full of men ! But all were very quiet and well behaved, and every evening they used to have an impromptu concert of war songs and choruses, which was very enjoyable.

On Saturday evening we anchored opposite Port Elizabeth, and stayed there till Monday noon, taking in cargo all day Sunday. I do not know if it is customary, or was done only because we were behind time, but it made the day seem very un-Sundaylike, and we had no service on board. Some passengers went on shore in the tug, but they could not return till evening. The sea was still far from smooth. I had quite recovered from the effects of the last voyage in a tug-boat, but had no desire for a second so soon ; so I stayed on the ship. It was rather aggravating, when one had only been to church twice in six months, to see many so near, and yet be unable to get to them.

Port Elizabeth is built on a rather steep incline. It slopes up from the edge of the water, and looks very pretty from the sea. I am told that you cannot drive down the steeper streets.

The cargo has all to be brought alongside on barges and hoisted on board by the derricks, as at East London. The sheep-shearing was just over, and it seemed as if we were never to get to the last bale of wool, load after load kept coming.

Though the wind had abated it had not ceased, and kept very cold. Our next stop was opposite Mossel Bay for a few hours, where we took in more wool. The town is very pretty, a sweet little place that looked quiet, homelike, and comfortable. It is spread along a gentle slope between the sea and

a high hill which stretches behind it. Had the hill only been wooded, the beauty of the picture would have been complete.

We passed both Cape Agulhas, the southern point of Africa, and the Cape of Good Hope by daylight, and near enough to see each plainly. The former is a low, apparently sandy, tract, by no means imposing; but the Cape of Good Hope is very beautiful, composed of masses of high, stern-looking rocks, whose outline continually varied as we approached and passed them.

We arrived at Cape Town on the afternoon of Wednesday, but so crowded were the docks with troopships, that we were obliged to anchor out in the bay till Thursday noon, and then went in at the very extremity of the docks, so it was quite a walk to reach the town. But as soon as dinner was over I went, anticipating a pleasant renewal of my acquaintance with the place. Alas! Cape Town looked forlorn. It might not have been the same place which I had so enjoyed six months previously. The terrible south-easter, the "Cape Doctor" as it is called, whose visits rarely exceed three days, had been blowing for three weeks. Everything was choked with dust. Houses were shut up tightly to keep a little of it out, and people struggled along in the wind and looked generally miserable and woe-begone. I went to have another look at the Botanical Gardens, but the poor plants, covered with dust and battered, looked as miserable as the people. I was very glad to get back before dark to the ship. There I found the soldiers, who had been obliged to remain on board all day, just getting ready to leave. They

were marched straight to the train at the side of the docks, and started that evening for the front.

Early next morning the large ship opposite to us moved out, and a splendid steamer of the P. and O. line came in her place. She was crowded with troops going to Durban, had stopped to coal, and was off again in the afternoon. It was amusing to watch the eagerness of the soldiers for newspapers. Several men on the dock had large bundles intended for them. These immense ships have to be taken into dock very slowly and are almost close alongside for some minutes before they are quite at rest and the gangway can be put out. During these minutes the excitement was intense, the soldiers crowded to the vessel's side, climbed on the awnings, and on anything else that would hold them, shouting and gesticulating for a paper ; the nearest stretching their hands out over the intervening space, which would keep just too wide to admit of their reaching any. Sometimes the man who had them would roll two or three into a bundle and throw them on board, when the fortunate catcher and his next neighbours eagerly devoured their contents. All these attempts were not a success, however, several bundles falling into the water.

After breakfast I made another attempt to see the town, going in the tram to call on an acquaintance in the suburbs. But the suburbs were no more inviting than the town itself. The lady I called on was quite out of sorts with "this dreadful wind," so I got back to the ship for dinner and declared that I would stay there till we sailed, which would not be till the next afternoon, and I kept my resolution.

Though a ship in dock coaling is not the pleasantest place imaginable, it was better than the town.

We were much amused after we set sail to find that one of our passengers was a gentleman who had come out only a week before. He declared that he never was in such a place in his life. He wondered the people did not all go blind in that dust. One week of it was enough for him ; so he took the next steamer home !

I managed to enjoy myself on the ship fairly well, learning more about the lading of a ship and the hard lives of the dockers than I ever knew before.

The steamers usually take in coal at Southampton to last for the voyage out and home again ; but this steamer had been up the coast twice from Cape Town with troops, so had used her supply and was obliged to coal here. A dirty, disagreeable job it is, and a steamer's appetite seems insatiable. When we remember that she burns from fifty to sixty tons a day we are not surprised at it. From eight in the morning till ten at night, working by the electric light, a procession of waggons loaded with bags of coal went slowly by. As they stopped, strong natives, begrimed with coal-dust, each seized a bag and emptied it into a great caldron, which was swung up by a derrick and emptied into the ship. Canvas was put up, and port-holes closed ; but that coal-dust penetrated everywhere. Our usually dapper stewards looked as if they had been sweeping chimneys, but when we looked at our own faces in the glass after coming down from the deck, we concluded to make no remarks about their appearance.

While coal was being taken into the middle of the

ship, cargo was being rapidly loaded at both ends. The loading is very laborious work and employs many hands. Here it is all done by natives. A large hatchway is uncovered in the middle of the deck. As the loads of wool bales come along, they are rolled on the ground, a rope noosed around each, and four at a time hooked to the ship's derrick rope and swung up on deck ; there the ropes are slipped off, the markings of each bale booked by an officer, and two natives roll a bale at a time down the hatchway. Below, other men are hard at work rolling the bales back and packing them tightly between the decks. There is no time to idle, no time to rest ; it is just work, work, work, to get us ready for sea as quickly as possible.

I thought of the easy, comfortable life of the raw Kaffir, and looked at the native here, almost a slave to the necessities of civilised life. Poor native ! is this all that the white man has given you ? Surely when he has deprived you of so much of this world's pleasure, he owes you far more effort than he is making to give you a knowledge of the life eternal.

Perhaps never before has Table Bay presented such a beautiful spectacle as when we were there. Some of the finest of the English steamships were riding proudly at anchor, representing nearly all the leading steamship companies. They had been hired as transports, and so crowded were the docks that as soon as the troops were landed many vessels had to go out into the bay to make room for others to come in.

The divers were very interesting as they came about the ship. They are much like a duck, but

slimmer, and seem equally at home in air or water ; they live on fish, which they catch by diving, and can stay under the water for a long time.

The penguins, too, swam about. Before coming to South Africa, I supposed that I knew something of zoology ; I have here discovered how lamentable is my ignorance. I have always seen penguins standing, in their little white pinafores, on rocks by the water-side, and somehow got the idea that the seaside was their dwelling-place, and that they were land birds. I suppose the seaside is their nesting-place, but to all intents and purposes the penguin is three-fourths a fish.

In the water it looks exactly like a small seal ; the beak is the only thing that gives you any idea that it is a bird. The little featherless wings are active paddles, just like a seal's flippers, and the feet being so near the extremity of the body give it just the outline of a seal in the water. It comes suddenly to the surface, gives its head a toss to shake the water off, glances about with its sharp, seal-like eyes, then down it goes again, staying under even longer than the divers, and reappears far away from where it went under, often with a fish in its mouth, which it proceeds to swallow whole.

Penguins' eggs are often eaten in Cape Town. They look much like a duck's egg, but need to be boiled a long while. Some are very good, in others the fishy taste is too strong for my liking. The appearance when boiled is peculiar. The "white" is not white, but like transparent jelly, and the yolk is rather dark.

It seemed as if those wool bales would never

cease coming ; but at last our end of the ship at least was full. The hatches were shut down, the steamer's bell rang, those who had come to see friends off went ashore, and at four o'clock on Saturday afternoon we set sail.

Everybody was soon energetically employed in getting the ship clean ; and, though the sailors declared that it would take all the time till they got home to make her look right again, it was not many hours before you would never have imagined that any coal-dust had been near her.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOMeward BOUND.

St. Helena—Jamestown—On Shore—Ascension—Contrast—
Appearance—Fishes—Flying Fish—Teneriffe—The Peak—
Santa Crux—Houses—Streets—Carts—Mules—Shops
—Cathedral—Balcony—Inside View—Chapel—Market—
Begging—Thieves—Weather.

OUR first stop was at St. Helena. The voyage so far had been pleasant, though rather cold and cloudy. As we approached, the island appeared like a great wall of rock rising out of the ocean. At the western end are detached pieces that much resemble the Needles, but the adjacent mainland is much higher in proportion than is the Isle of Wight. We had to go half way round the island to find the little seaport of Jamestown, which occupies the one valley stretching down to the sea through which you can reach the interior of the island. The rocks everywhere else slope almost perpendicularly to the water's edge, and appear quite devoid of vegetation.

Jamestown makes a beautiful picture, nestling in its narrow valley, along which it stretches, sloping gently upwards for some distance. A pretty stone church with a spire stands near the sea, the houses have plenty of bright green foliage about them, and,

with the dark rocks towering behind, both colouring and outline are very lovely. By its side, on the hilltop, where the green plateau slopes slightly towards the sea, is another town, apparently, only the houses are much scattered. This is the military quarter. To reach it you must climb a steep road winding up from the valley, or scale the perpendicular rock by a tremendous staircase called "the ladder," going from top to bottom of the rocks. The look of it would turn most people dizzy, but I saw several soldiers coming down.

We had only an hour and a half on shore, not time enough to visit the historic Longwood, but quite sufficient to see the little town. There is a stairway fastened to the ship's side reaching down to the water; this folds up when not in use, but was now opened. Down this we went, stepping from it into one of the little boats that had come out to take us on shore. The sea was quite smooth, but we found it a more difficult matter to get out of the boat than into it; our landing-place being some wet, slippery-looking steps, against which the boat kept dancing. However, a strong pole was stood in the stern of the boat, so, grasping this, and, when the boat seemed in the right position, stepping quickly out, we all landed safely.

The road led for a short distance along the foot of the cliffs, then reached the valley and town. A strong wall is built across the entrance of the valley, and you enter the town by passing under an arched gateway. Without being in any way striking, the near view of the town is quite as pleasing as the distant one. Napoleon Street, its one thoroughfare,

stretches on up the valley, which is just wide enough to accommodate the houses on either side of it with good-sized gardens behind them. The houses were plain, but clean and comfortable-looking, trees and flowering shrubs being numerous. We went to the little market and got bananas and pears, the only fruits in season. Little is grown there of any kind, I am told. Many women were about selling photos of the island, also very pretty belts and bracelets made of small dark-coloured seeds. I was struck with the nice behaviour of the people; they seemed to want us to have their best, not to palm off rubbish upon us. Our presence was evidently a pleasure to them. We had brought their fortnightly mail; and in this little place, where everybody knows everybody else, the advent of so many new faces must of itself be a pleasing event. I should much have liked a further acquaintance with the little island, the interior, I believe, being fertile and pleasing; but there was only time to go to the top of the long street and then back to the ship.

Soon after eight the next Monday morning, we were anchored opposite the little military station at Ascension Island. This is a rocky island, but the appearance as you approach it is not so stern as that of St. Helena. It is a mass of hills, some of them sloping down gently to the water's edge, and there are long stretches of light brown sand in places. St. Helena looks like a great fortress which has been raised by some mysterious power from the ocean's bed, and there stands, stern and grim, defying alike the powers of nature and man. Ascension has a peaceful look, as if meant to be a haven of

rest for the storm-tossed mariner who may be driven by the tempestuous ocean near its shores.

Its appearance as we rode at anchor was very pretty. Opposite is the military station, which seems to contain a good number of substantial buildings of light-coloured stone. On our left is a high, almost conical hill, having a signal station on the top. Its colour is very peculiar—a bright, bronzy red, with a sort of under-shade of green; both, I thought, the result of vegetation. On the right are much lower hills, some of the same peculiar colour, some greener. These form a pretty background to dwelling-houses which nestle near their bases a little back from the seashore. In the foreground is a wide border of light brown sand, with rocks, apparently black, at intervals; the whole stretching onward to a point of rock projecting out into the sea far away, up which we could see clouds of white spray continually dashing as the waves broke over them. What must be the force of those waves in stormy weather! for at that time only the tiniest of white-capped wavelets broke the smoothness of the ocean's surface.

We were much amused by watching the thousands of fishes that were swimming in the clear water about the ship. They looked light brown with a bright blue stripe along the base of the upper and lower fin, which gleamed in the water beautifully. If we threw a large piece of bread to them, a hundred or more would fight for it, those on the top of the shoal being often lifted half out of the water by the crowding of those beneath. Some of the men began fishing, and soon caught several. They are thick fishes, about a foot long. Out of the water they

look black, and are closely covered with fine, sinuous lines of dark blue, which about the head change to yellow. From the eyes, which are not large, fine, straight blue lines extend to the front of the head. On the back is a short, strong spike like a little horn. Narrow bright blue bands extend at the base of the fins. The scales are very hard and close. They are not used for food, the flesh being poisonous ; but the skins are sometimes dried and made into tobacco pouches. We also noticed several sharks, which provokingly kept where we could not see them very well.

On Tuesday, the day before we crossed the equator, the sea seemed alive with flying fishes. Coming out we saw dozens, but seldom more than three or four together ; now, without any exaggeration, there were thousands. I went up to the ship's bow to watch them, as from that part I could get the nearest view. A gentleman who had watched them coming out told me that they did not really fly, but took a long leap from the water, their extended fins only helping to support them in the air for a longer time. I wanted to decide the question for myself. After watching them for a long while I am quite sure that he was mistaken. The fishes really fly. As they spring from the water the wing-like fins are moved with great rapidity—so quickly, in fact, that you must be near and look sharp to discern the motion ; but having got a good momentum the fins are extended and held motionless, the fishes throwing themselves a little on one side, and letting the gentle breeze bear them along, just as we often see birds do. Some flew straight, others in a curved

line, but they appeared to be unable to change their direction much while in the air. I saw many just dip into the water and start a new flight in a quite different direction, but I could not see one turn sharply in the air. It was very beautiful to see them rise in flocks as the great ship approached them. Some were like little humming-birds, so small you could scarcely see them. The largest were somewhat like a big herring. The bodies shine in the sun just like silver; the fins of the larger ones appearing like bronze, those of the little ones being nearly transparent.

The following Tuesday we reached Teneriffe. The day was beautifully clear, and we had a fine view of the Peak, its snow-covered top looking very beautiful; but you can get little idea of the size or shape of the mountain, as the high range which runs along nearer the shore partly hides it on that side. From our anchorage near Santa Crux it is quite hidden, and as we did not sail till dark we did not see it from the northern side.

At this place we had to coal again, so we got four hours on shore. It seems a busy little island, so many ships stopping for coal, water, and fresh fruits and vegetables. Santa Crux is very quaint and pretty. The people evidently know how to build houses that are comfortable in a warm climate. All seemed to be two-storeyed and the rooms very lofty. The windows were remarkably large, and had green venetian shutters inside, so that light and air could be let in while the heat of the sun was shut out. Most houses were lime-washed, either white or very light brown, giving the narrow streets

a clean and cool appearance. The sidewalks were barely wide enough for two to walk abreast; the roadway would just allow two carts to pass. Few vehicles were seen, and those were strong, rough-looking carts; the harness of the horses being very quaint. The large wooden collars and saddles were gaily painted with green, red, and yellow. Pack-mules were numerous, with all sorts of basket, boxes, and bundles slung across their backs.

The houses appeared to be built around a square, open court. A large, wide door, which stood open, led from the street into a short lobby, at the end of which was another door, closed, but often half glass, so that one could get a glimpse into the court. Many courts looked very pretty, containing palms, vines, and flowering plants. I went into the court of one that seemed to be a tenement house. It had no plants in it, but was flagged, and at each side a stone staircase led up to the balcony which ran around the upper storey. Apparently there are no other yards to most of the houses, the flat roofs being fitted with posts and lines for clothes-drying, and some having plants and bushes growing in pots on them. Few shops have show-windows. A very wide door stands open in front, a counter going right across the shop opposite to it, on and behind which the goods are displayed. They can be seen fairly well from the street and are safe from the sun. Shops similar in kind are found side by side—in one street all drapers, in another shoe-shops, here grocers, there hardware. The workshops are built like the others. You could glance in at the large, open street

door as you passed and see men sitting around the sides of the room busy at shoemaking or some other work. They evidently know how to enjoy the balmy air of the island at all times.

The cathedral is very old and interesting. The only pretty thing about it externally is a little balcony over the main entrance, of pleasing proportions, ornamented with very fine old wood-carving. But with the exception of its high tower the cathedral looks on the outside much more like an old market than a church. Within are a great many very tawdry images and poor paintings, but viewed from the organ loft at the west end, the effect of the whole is rather fine, the glitter of gold and varieties of colour blending very harmoniously. The artistic effect is much heightened by each of the plain stone pillars being draped half-way down with bright red curtains. At one side, quite separated from the rest, is a tiny chapel, ornamented all around with most beautiful and elaborate wood-carving; but the building generally had an out-of-repair, neglected look.

There is a good market, and a fine display of fruit—oranges, figs, bananas, guavas, prickly-pears, apples, and nuts; but buying was a very awkward business. Everybody jabbered Spanish at us at once, and it was a difficult matter to ascertain the price of anything in English.

I admired the little town very much, but cannot say I liked the appearance of the people. The children were very troublesome, following us about begging—"Penny here, penny here."

I happened to come back in the row-boat with

some of our second-class ladies. One was showing a pretty little sailor-boy doll which she had bought, and asked, "How much do you think I gave for it?" The others could not guess; so she said, "I gave the old woman a sixpence, and she gave me a sixpence and two halfpennies back," and then they all laughed at the good bargain. According to my ideas of right and wrong any one who would let a poor old woman, who understood neither the language nor the money properly, cheat herself like that was a thief, and one of the meanest type.

The weather throughout the voyage until we were four days off Southampton was delightful. It seemed rather strange that I should have it cool through the tropics a second time, really cooler than when going out. We had several showers, but not a single wet day all the way from East London. We had a grand sea for two days just before entering the bay, and I was glad to be able to enjoy it. As we neared our journey's end it grew bitterly cold. We anchored in the Solent about three in the morning, and went into dock as soon as it was light. Such a depressing day! Snow was lying about in places, and a miserably cold rain was falling. What a change! Still, it looked nice to see the green fields and spreading trees of old England again, even if the latter were bare of leaves. We know what English weather is. If people will come into it in December, they must make the best of it! It is just these miserable rains, which we all dislike so, that give the country its verdure and beauty. Nay, more, it is the inclement weather and long winter

evenings that make the English home so much more to its possessor than the home in a genial climate, with its outdoor existence, can ever be. I noticed that even those born in the colony of English parents always spoke of England as "home."

CHAPTER XIX.

CONCLUSION.

Present Opinions—Clothing—Effect of Climate—Women's Work
—Music—Testimonials—The Future.

SEATED by a blazing fire, with time to look back and reflect, what do I now think of South Africa?

When I was coming away, some one said to me, "You will come back again—everybody does who has been here once."

I answered, "No, I think not." Now I do not feel quite so sure. It is a place that fascinates you. It is so strange, so wonderful, you want to see more of it. Though the winds are bad while they last, they do not usually continue more than two or three days at a time, nor does cloudy weather, and the bright sunshine is so genial and invigorating! Though I felt the cold very much, I believe one gets accustomed to it after a while; those who live there do not usually seem to mind it, if their houses are comfortable ones.

The colonial rule for clothing is only to wear thin garments such as are right for the middle of the day, wearing an extra wrap if chilly. They say warm clothing overheats the body in the

warm, sunny days, and then you feel cold and changes quicker. The air is so thin and dry that, though severe, it does not go through one as the damp cold does here, and however cold and miserable you feel, you never seem to take chills.

It is wonderful how the climate suits many people. It has very much benefited me, even in my short sojourn in a not very suitable part. A lady in Cape Town told me of a gentleman friend who, when brought, was so ill that they expected him to die on the voyage. He had to be carried from the ship to a house in the suburbs. From there, when able to be moved, he was taken to higher ground, then up on the Karroo. This was several years ago. He was a doctor, and now has an extensive practice, riding miles about the country and keeping very well. I met two ladies looking the picture of health, neither of whom was expected to live when they came out. But it does not cure everybody. I have met several going home worse than they came. It is very foolish for people to wait till they have scarcely any strength left before going to a place where they will be obliged to do without many little luxuries that they are used to at home, and have much less chance of recovering health and strength than if they had come sooner.

This is not a country for large agricultural farms, the returns being so uncertain, but livestock are very profitable. The country seems to be in want of energetic, wideawake men who understand managing farms in a scientific manner, not content to leave everything as the Kaffirs have had it for generations.

With regard to women's work : teachers who are really well educated can get good places, either in schools or families ; for the latter it does not matter whether certificated or not. One proficient in French and music is always in demand. All the farmers want their children taught music ; but very elementary knowledge is sufficient for many places. Still, there are educated people who want the best, and are willing to pay well for it, since it is very scarce.

I will give you an idea of the quality to be found commonly. I expected to find the two elder children that I taught last fairly good players, as one had learned three years, the other two, from a lady who was considered quite a clever teacher in Queenstown. What was my astonishment to discover that neither of them could count, and that they rattled off their scales without the slightest regard to the fingering ; their teacher never minded that, they said, if they went fast. She used to play their new pieces for them, and, as they had a good ear for music, they picked up the time, and no doubt part of the tune, in that way, for the younger girl did not half know her notes.

There is plenty of demand for the best, but poor teachers are only too common. It is said that all the colonial girls are passing their examinations and becoming governesses, because it gives them a good chance of picking up husbands !

Shiftless, lazy women are only too common also, so all such had better stay away ; but active, industrious ones seem to get on in all callings.

Let no one go without plenty of testimonials, from responsible people if possible. All sorts of

people go into a colony, and so its inhabitants naturally are a little cautious in receiving strangers. If you are worthy to be received among them, take your credentials, for how else can they know what you are? Even if you have a friend or two there, who may be helpful, take them just the same; you may be glad of them, and in a strange place too many helps are much better than too few.

I met a young man, a teacher, who had experienced this to his cost. A gentleman who was on a visit home had met him and persuaded him to come to the Cape, promising him a good situation. Though he had employment at home at the time, he decided to go. Having to give a month's notice, it was arranged that he should come in that time. As he was going to a situation he did not trouble to take testimonials with him, and brought but little money. When he arrived at Cape Town, the gentleman had given up the business and gone to Johannesburg. He wrote and telegraphed to the address left, but could get no reply. There he was, in a strange town, with neither money nor friends, and no help could be obtained from home till a letter had gone and one returned. He applied to the educational department for a situation as teacher, and after a while obtained one; but he had both inconveniences and hardships to put up with while waiting.

Every one is hoping that when the war is over an era of greater prosperity for the colony will begin. I hope that it may be so. It is a country of wonderful possibilities. May those who seek its shores when the din of war shall be ended go forth to fight bravely for right and truth, to raise

public opinion to a higher plane, and to live for something better and nobler than mere money-making. Then shall the colony see days of real prosperity, for "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow therewith."

THE END.

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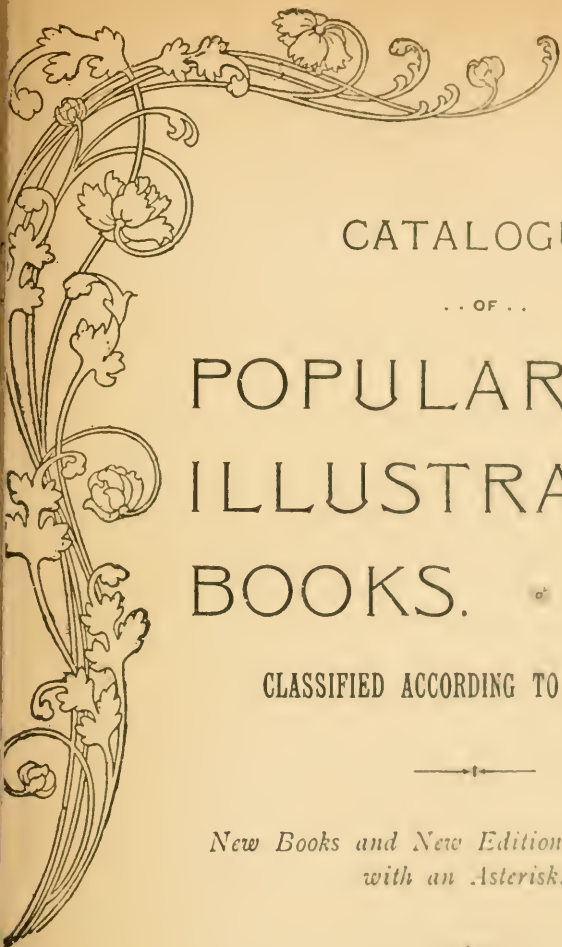
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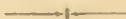
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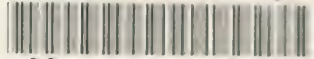
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